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THE

WORKS

OF

PRESIDENT EDWARDS:

WITH A

MEMOIR OF HIS LIFE.

IN TEN VOLUMES.

VOL. VIII.

CONTAINING,

I. SEVENTEEN OCCASIONAL SERMONS.
II. MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

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SERMON I.

Acts xvi. 29, 30.

Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

We have here and in the context an account of the conversion of the jailer, which is one of the most remarkable instances of the kind in the scriptures. The jailer before seems not only to have been wholly insensible to the things of religion, but to have been a persecutor, and to have persecuted these very men, Paul and Silas; though he now comes to them in so earnest a manner, asking them what he must do to be saved. We are told in the context that all the magistrates and multitude of the city rose up jointly in a tumult against them, and took them, and cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Whereupon he thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And it is probable he did not act in this merely as the servant or instrument of the magistrates, but that he joined with the rest of the people in their rage against them, and that he did what he did urged on by his own will, as well as the magistrates' commands; which made him execute their commands with such rigour.

But when Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises at midnight, and there was suddenly a great earthquake, and God had in so wonderful a manner set open the prison doors, and every man's bands were loosed, he was greatly terrified; and in a kind of desperation, was about to kill himself. But Paul and Silas crying out to him, "do thyself no harm, for we are all here," then he called for a light, and sprang in, as we have the account in the text. We may observe,

1. The objects of his concern. He is anxious about his salvation: he is terrified by his guilt, especially by his guilt in his ill treatment of these ministers of Christ. He is concerned to escape from that guilty state, the miserable state, he was in by reason of sin.

2. The sense which he has of the dreadfulness of his present state. This he manifests in several ways.

1. By his great haste to escape from that state. By his haste to inquire what he must do. He seems to be urged by the most pressing concern, sensible of his present necessity of deliverance, without any delay. Before, he was quiet and secure in his natural state; but now his eyes are opened, he is in the utmost haste. If the house had been on fire over his head, he could not have asked more earnestly, or as being in greater haste. He could soon have come to Paul and Silas, to ask them what he must do, if he had only walked. But he was in too great haste to walk only, or to run; for he sprang in; he leaped into the place where they were. He fled from wrath. He fled from the fire of divine justice, and so hastened, as one that fled for his life.

2. By his behaviour and gesture before Paul and Silas. He fell down. That he fell down before those whom he had persecuted, and thrust into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks, shows what was the state of his mind. It shows some great distress, that makes such an alteration in him, that brings him to this. He was broken down, as it were, by the distress of his mind, in a sense of the dreadfulness of his condition.

3. His earnest manner of inquiring of them what he shall do to escape from this miserable condition; "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So distressed, that he is brought to be willing to do any thing; to have salvation on any terms, and by any means, however difficult; brought, as it were, to write a blank, and give it in to God, that God may prescribe his own terms.

Doctrine. They who are in a natural condition, are in a dreadful condition. This I shall endeavour to make appear by a particular consideration of the state and condition of unregenerate persons.

I. As to their actual condition in this world.

II. As to their relations to the future world.

I. The condition of those who are in a natural state, is dreadful in the present world.

First. On account of the depraved state of their natures. As men come into the world, their natures are dreadfully depraved. Man in his primitive state was a noble piece of divine workmanship; but by the fall it is dreadfully defaced. It is awful to think that so excellent a creature as man is, should be so ruined. The dreadfulness of the condition, which unconverted men are in in this respect, appears in the following things:

1. The dreadfulness of their depravity appears in that they are so sottishly blind and ignorant. God gave man a faculty of reason and understanding, which is a noble faculty. Herein he differs from all other creatures here below. He is exalted in his na-

ture above them, and is in this respect like the angels, and is made capable to know God, and to know spiritual and eternal things. And God gave him understanding for this end, that he might know him, and know heavenly things, and made him as capable to know these things as any others. But man has debased himself, and has lost his glory in this respect. He has become as ignorant of the excellency of God as the very beasts. His understanding is full of darkness; his mind is blind, is altogether blind to spiritual things. Men are ignorant of God, and ignorant of Christ, ignorant of the way of salvation, ignorant of their own happiness, blind in the midst of the brightest and clearest light, ignorant under all manner of instructions. Romans iii. 17. "The way of peace they have not known." Isaiah xxvii. 11. "It is a people of no understanding." Jeremiah iv. 22. "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and have none understanding:" v. 21. "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding." Psalms xcv. 10, 11. "It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways; unto whom I sware in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest." 1 Corinthians xv. 34. "Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

There is a spirit of atheism prevailing in the hearts of men; a strange disposition to doubt of the very being of God, and of another world, and of every thing, which cannot be seen with the bodily eyes. Psalms xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." They do not realize that God sees them, when they commit sin, and will call them to an account for it. And therefore, if they can hide sin from the eyes of men, they are not concerned, but are bold to commit it. Psalms xciv. 7, 8, 9. "Yet they say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, ye brutish among the people; and, ye fools, when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear, shall he not hear? he that formed the eye, shall he not see?" Psalms lxxiii. 11. "They say, how doth God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" So sottishly unbelieving are they of future things, of heaven and hell, and will commonly run the venture of damnation sooner than be convinced. They are stupidly senseless to the importance of eternal things. How hard to make them believe, and to give them a real conviction that to be happy to all eternity is better than all other good; and to be miserable for ever under the wrath of God, is worse than all other evil. Men show themselves senseless enough in temporal things; but in spiritual things far more so. Luke xii. 56. "Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time?" They are very subtle in evil designs; but sottish in those things which most concern them.

Jeremiah iv. 22. "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Wicked men show themselves more foolish and senseless of what is best for them, than the very brutes. Isaiah i. 3. "The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib; but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider." Jeremiah viii. 7. "Yea, the stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

2. They have no goodness in them. Romans vii. 18. "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." They have no principle, that disposes them to any thing that is good. Natural men have no higher principle in their hearts than self-love. And herein they do not excel the devils. The devils love themselves, and love their own happiness, and are afraid of their own misery. And they go no further. And the devils would be as religious as the best of natural men, if they were in the same circumstances. They would be as moral, and would pray as earnestly to God, and take as much pains for salvation, if there were the like opportunity. And as there is no good principle in the hearts of natural men, so there are never any good exercises of heart, never one good thought, or motion of heart in them. Particularly, there is no love to God in them. They never had the least degree of love to the infinitely glorious Being. They never had the least true respect to the Being that made them, and in whose hand their breath is, and from whom are all their mercies. However they may seem to do things at times out of respect to God, and wear a face as though they honoured him, and highly esteemed him, it is all in mere hypocrisy. Though there may be a fair outside, they are like painted sepulchres; within, there is nothing but putrefaction and rottenness. They have no love to Christ, the glorious Son of God, who is so worthy of their love, and has shown such wonderful grace to sinners in dying for them. They never did any thing out of any real respect to the Redeemer of the world, since they were born. They never brought forth any fruit to that God, who made them, and in whom they live, and move, and have their being. They never have in any way answered the end for which they were made. They have hitherto lived altogether in vain, and to no purpose. They never so much as sincerely obeyed one command of God; never so much as moved one finger out of a true spirit of obedience to him, who made them to serve him. And when they have seemed outwardly to comply with God's commands, their hearts were not in it. They did not do it out of any spirit of subjection to God, or any disposition to obey him, but were merely driven to it by fear, or in some way influenced by their worldly interest. They never gave God the honour of one of his

attributes. They never gave him the honour of his authority by obeying him. They never gave him the honour of his sovereignty by submitting to him. They never gave him the honour of his holiness and mercy by loving him. They never gave him the honour of his sufficiency and faithfulness by trusting in him; but have looked upon God as one not fit to be believed or trusted, and have treated him as if he were a liar: 1 John v. 10. "He that believeth not God hath made him a liar." They never so much as heartily thanked God for one mercy they have received in their whole lives, though God has always maintained them, and they have always lived upon his bounty. They never so much as once heartily thanked Christ for coming into the world, and dying to give them an opportunity to be saved. They never would show him so much gratitude as to receive him, when he has knocked at their door; but have always shut the door against him, though he has come to knock at their door upon no other ground but only to offer himself to be their Saviour. They never so much as had any true desires after God or Christ in their whole lives. When God has offered himself to them to be their portion, and Christ to be the friend of their souls, they did not desire it. They never desired to have God and Christ for their portion. They had rather be without them than with them if they could avoid going to hell without them. They never had so much as an honourable thought of God. They always have esteemed earthly things before him. And notwithstanding all they have heard in the commands of God and Christ, they have always preferred a little worldly profit or sinful pleasure before them.

3. Unconverted men are in a dreadful condition by reason of the dreadful wickedness which there is in them.

1. Sin is a thing of a dreadful nature, and that because it is against an infinitely great and an infinitely holy God. There is in the nature of man enmity against God, contempt of God, rebellion against God. Sin rises up as an enemy against the Most High. It is a dreadful thing for a creature to be an enemy to the Creator, or to have any such thing in his heart as enmity against him; as will be very clear, if we consider the difference between God and the creature, and how all creatures, compared with him, are as the small dust of the balance, are as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. There is an infinite evil in sin. If we saw the hundredth part of the evil there is in sin, it would make us sensible that those who have any sin, let it be ever so small, are in a dreadful condition.

2. The hearts of natural men are exceedingly full of sin. If they had but one sin in their hearts, it would be sufficient to render their condition very dreadful. But they have not only one sin, but all manner of sin. There is every kind of lust. The heart is a mere sink of sin, a fountain of corruption, whence issue

all manner of filthy streams. Mark vii. 21, 22. "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." There is no one lust in the heart of the devil, that is not in the heart of man. Natural men are in the image of the devil. The image of God is rased out, and the image of the devil is stamped upon them. God is graciously pleased to restrain the wickedness of men, principally by fear and respect to their credit and reputation, and by education. And if it were not for such restraints as these, there is no kind of wickedness that men would not commit, whenever it came in their way. The commission of those things, at the mention of which men are now ready to start, and seem to be shocked when they hear them read, would be common and general; and earth would be a kind of hell. What would not natural men do if they were not afraid? Matthew x. 17. "But beware of men." Men have not only every kind of lust, and wicked and perverse dispositions in their hearts, but they have them to a dreadful degree. There is not only pride, but an amazing degree of it: pride, whereby a man is disposed to set himself even above the throne of God itself. The hearts of natural men are mere sinks of sensuality. Man is become like a beast in placing his happiness in sensual enjoyments. The heart is full of the most loathsome lusts. The souls of natural men are more vile and abominable than any reptile. If God should open a window in the heart, so that we might look into it, it would be the most loathsome spectacle that ever was set before our eyes. There is not only malice in the hearts of natural men, but a fountain of it. Men naturally therefore deserve the language applied to them by Christ, Matt. iii. 7. "O generation of vipers;" and Matt. xxiii. 33. "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers." Men, if it were not for fear and other such restraints, would not only commit all manner of sin, but to what degree, to what length would they not proceed? What has a natural man to keep him from openly blaspheming God, as much as any of the devils; yea, from dethroning him, if that were possible, and fear and other such restraints were out of the way? Yea, would it not be thus with many of those, who now appear with a fair face, and will speak most of God, and make many pretences of worshipping and serving him? The exceeding wickedness of natural men appears abundantly in the sins they commit, notwithstanding all these restraints. Every natural man, if he reflects, may see enough, to show him how exceedingly sinful he is. Sin flows from the heart as constantly as water flows from a fountain. Jeremiah vi. 7. "As a fountain casteth out her waters, so she casteth out her wickedness." And this wickedness, that so abounds in their hearts, has dominion over them. They are slaves to it: Rom. vii. 14. "Sold under sin." They are so under the power

of sin, that they are driven on by their lusts in a course against their own conscience, and against their own interest. They are hurried on to their own ruin, and that at the same time their reason tells them, it will probably be their ruin: 2 Peter ii. 14. "Cannot cease from sin." On account of wicked men's being so under the power of sin, the heart of man is said to be *desperately* wicked. Jeremiah xvii. 9, and Ephesians ii. 1. "Dead in trespasses and sins."

3. The hearts of natural men are dreadfully hard and incorrigible. There is nothing but the mighty power of God will move them. They will cleave to sin, and go on in sin, let what will be done with them. Proverbs xxvii. 22. "Though thou shouldest bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." There is nothing that will awe our hearts; and there is nothing that will draw them to obedience: let there be mercies or afflictions, threatenings or gracious calls and invitations, frowning, or patience and long suffering, or fatherly counsels and exhortations. Isaiah xxvi. 10. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."

Secondly. The relative state of those who are in an unconverted condition is dreadful. This will appear if we consider,

1. Their relative state with respect to God; and that because,

1. They are without God in the world. They have no interest or part in God: He is not their God: He hath declared that he will not be their God. Hosea i. 9. God and believers have a mutual covenant relation and right to each other. They are his people, and he is their God. But he is not the covenant God of those who are in an unconverted state. There is great alienation and estrangement between God and the wicked: he is not their Father and portion: they have nothing to challenge of God, they have no right to any one of his attributes. The believer can challenge a right in the power of God, in his wisdom and holiness, his grace and love. All are made over to him, to be for his benefit. But the unconverted can claim no right in any of God's perfections. They have no God to protect and defend them in this evil world: to defend them from sin, or from Satan, or any evil. They have no God to guide and direct them in any doubts or difficulties, to comfort and support their minds under afflictions. They are without God in all their affairs, in all the business they undertake, in their family affairs, and in their personal affairs, in their outward concerns, and in the concerns of their souls.

How can a creature be more miserable, than to be separated from the Creator, and to have no God, whom he can call his own God? He is wretched indeed, who goes up and down in the world, without a God to take care of him, to be his guide and protector, and to

bless him in his affairs. The very light of nature teaches that a man's God is his all. Judges xviii. 24. "Ye have taken away my Gods, and what have I more?" There is but one God, and in him they have no right. They are without that God, whose will must determine their whole well being, both here and for ever. That unconverted men are without God shows that they are liable to all manner of evil. They are liable to the power of the devil, to the power of all manner of temptation, for they are without God to protect them. They are liable to be deceived and seduced into erroneous opinions, and to embrace damnable doctrines. It is not possible to deceive the saints in this way. But the unconverted may be deceived. They may become papists, or heathens, or atheists. They have nothing to secure them from it. They are liable to be given up of God to judicial hardness of heart. They deserve it; and since God is not their God, they have no certainty that God will not inflict this awful judgment upon them. As they are without God in the world, they are liable to commit all manner of sin, and even the unpardonable sin itself. They cannot be sure they shall not commit that sin. They are liable to build up a false hope of heaven, and so to go hoping to hell. They are liable to die senseless and stupid, as many have died. They are liable to die in such a case as Saul and Judas did, fearless of hell. They have no security from it. They are liable to all manner of mischief, since they are without God. They cannot tell what shall befal them, nor when they are secure from any thing. They are not safe one moment. Ten thousand fatal mischiefs may befal them, that may make them miserable for ever. They, who have God for their God, are safe from all such evils. It is not possible that they should befal them. God is their covenant God, and they have his faithful promise to be their refuge. But what mischief is there, which may not befal natural men? Whatever hopes they may have, may be disappointed. Whatever fair prospect there may seem to be of their conversion and salvation, it may vanish away. They may make great progress towards the kingdom of God, and yet come short at last. They may seem to be in a very hopeful way to be converted, and yet never be converted. A natural man is sure of nothing. He is sure of no good, nor is he sure of escaping any evil. It is therefore a dreadful condition that a natural man is in. They, who are in a natural state, are lost. They have wandered from God, and they are like lost sheep, that have wandered from their shepherd. They are poor helpless creatures in a howling wilderness, and have no shepherd to protect or to guide them. They are desolate, and exposed to innumerable fatal mischiefs.

2. They are not only without God, but the wrath of God abides upon them. John iii. 36. "He that believeth not the Son, shall

not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him." There is no peace between God and them, but God is angry with them every day. He is not only angry with them, but that to a dreadful degree. There is a fire kindled in God's anger; it burns like fire. Wrath abides upon them, which, if it should be executed, would plunge them into the lowest hell, and make them miserable there to all eternity. They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. God has been angry with them ever since they began to sin: he has been provoked by them every day, ever since they exercised any reason; and he is provoked by them more and more every hour. The flame of his wrath is continually burning. There are many now in hell that never have provoked God more than they, nor so much as many of them. Wherever they go, they go about with the dreadful wrath of God abiding on them. They eat, and drink, and sleep under wrath. How dreadful a condition, therefore, are they in! It is the most awful thing for the creature to have the wrath of his Creator abiding on him. The wrath of God is a thing infinitely dreadful. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion. But what is the wrath of a king, who is but a worm of the dust, to the wrath of the infinitely great and dreadful God? How dreadful is it to be under the wrath of the first being, the Being of beings, the great Creator and mighty possessor of heaven and earth! How dreadful is it for a person to go about under the wrath of the God, who gave him being, and in whom he lives and moves, who is every where present, and without whom he cannot move a step, nor draw a breath! Natural men, inasmuch as they are under wrath, are under a curse. God's wrath and curse are continually upon them. They can have no reasonable comfort, therefore, in any of their enjoyments; for they do not know but that they are given them in wrath, and shall be curses to them, and not blessings. As it is said in Job xviii. 15. "Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation." How can they take any comfort in their food, or in their possessions, when they do not know but all are given them, to fit them for the slaughter.

II. Their relative state will appear dreadful, if we consider how they stand related to the devil.

1. They who are in a natural state are the children of the devil. As the saints are the children of God, so the ungodly are the children of the devil. 1 John iii. 10. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." Mat. xiii. 38, 39. The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of the wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil. John viii. 44. "Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do." They are, as it were, begotten of the devil; they proceed from him. 1 John iii. 8. "He, that committeth sin, is of the devil." As Adam begat a son in his own likeness, so are wicked men in the likeness and image of the de-

vil. They acknowledge this relation, and own themselves children of the devil, by consenting that he should be their father. They subject themselves to him, hearken to his counsels, as children hearken to the counsels of a father. They learn of him to imitate him, and do as he does, as children learn to imitate their parents. John viii. 38. "I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and ye do that which ye have seen with your father." How awful a state is this! How dreadful is it to be a child of the devil, the spirit of darkness, the prince of hell, that wicked, malignant and cruel spirit! To have any thing to do with him is very dreadful. It would be accounted a dreadful frightful thing only to meet the devil, to have him appear to a person in a visible shape. How dreadful then must it be to be his child; how dreadful for any person to have the devil for his father!

2. They are the devil's captives and servants. Man before his fall was in a state of liberty; but now he has fallen into Satan's hands. The devil has got the victory, and carried him captive. Natural men are in Satan's possession, and they are under his dominion. They are brought by him into subjection to his will to go at his bidding, and do what he commands. 2 Timothy ii. 26. "Taken captive by him at his will." The devil rules over ungodly men. They are all his slaves, and do his drudging. This argues their state to be dreadful. Men account it an unhappy state of life to be slaves; and especially to be slaves to a bad master, to one who is very hard, unreasonable and cruel. How miserable do we look upon those persons, who are taken captive by the Turks, or other such barbarous nations, and put by them to the meanest and most cruel slavery, and treated no better than they treat their cattle! But what is this to being taken captive by the devil, the prince of hell, and made a slave to him? Had not a man better be a slave to any one on earth than to the devil? The devil is, of all masters, the most cruel, and treats his servants the worst. He puts them to the vilest service, to that which is the most dishonourable of any in the world. No work is so dishonourable as the practice of sin. The devil puts his servants to such work as debases them below the dignity of human nature. They must make themselves like beasts to do that work to serve their filthy lusts. And besides the meanness of the work, it is a very hard service. The devil causes them to serve him at the expense of the peace of their own conscience, and oftentimes at the expense of their reputation, at the expense of their estates, and shortening of their days. The devil is a cruel master; for the service upon which he puts his slaves, is to undo themselves. He keeps them hard at work day and night, to work their own ruin. He never intends to give them any reward for their pains, but their pains are to work out their own everlasting destruction. It is to gather fuel and kindle the fire for themselves to be tormented in to all eternity.

3. The soul of a natural man is the habitation of the devil. The devil is not only their father, and rules over them, but he dwells in them. It is a dreadful thing for a man to have the devil near him, often coming to him. But it is a more dreadful thing to have him dwell with a man, to take up his constant abode with him; and more dreadful yet to have him dwell in him, to take up his abode in his heart. But thus it is with every natural man. He takes up his abode in his heart. As the soul of a godly man the habitation of the spirit of God, so is the soul of a wicked man the habitation of unclean spirits. As the soul of a godly man is the temple of God, so the soul of a wicked man is the synagogue of satan. A wicked man's soul is in scripture called *Satan's house* and *Satan's palace.* Matthew xii. 27. "How can one enter into a strong man's house?" meaning the devil. And Luke xi. 21. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace." Satan not only lives, but reigns, in the heart of a wicked man. He has not only taken up his abode there, but he has set up his throne there. The heart of a wicked man, is the place of the devil's rendezvous. The doors of a wicked man's heart are open to devils. They have free access there, though they are shut against God and Jesus Christ. There are many devils. no doubt, that have to do with one wicked man, and his heart is the place where they meet. The soul of a wicked man is, as it was said of Babylon, the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Thus dreadful is the condition of a natural man by reason of the relation in which he stands to the devil.

II. The state of unconverted men is very dreadful, if we consider its relation to the future world. Our state here is not lasting, but transitory. We are pilgrims and strangers here, and are principally designed for a future world. We continue in this present state but a short time; but we are to be in that future state to all eternity. And therefore men are to be denominated either happy or miserable, chiefly with regard to that future state. It matters but little comparatively what our state is here, beccause it will continue but a short time; it is nothing to eternity. But that man is a happy man, who is entitled to happiness; and he is miserable, who is in danger of misery, in his eternal state. Prosperity or adversity in the present state alters them but very little, because this state is of so short continuance.

1. Those, who are in a natural condition, have no title to any inheritance in another world. There are glorious things in another world: there are unsearchable riches, an unspeakable and inconceivable abundance; but they have nothing to do with it. Heaven is a world of glory and blessedness; but they have no right to the least portion of those blessings. If they should die and go out of the world as they are, they would go destitute, hav-

ing no inheritance, no friend, no enjoyments to go to. They will have no God to whom they may go, no Redeemer to receive their departing souls, no angel to be a ministering spirit to them, to take care of them, to guard or defend them, no interest in that Redeemer, who has purchased those blessings. What is said of the Ephesians is true of those who are in a natural condition. "At that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." What a dreadful case are they are in, who live in the world having no hope, without any title to any benefits hereafter, and without any ground to hope for any good in their future and eternal state!

2. Natural men are in a dreadful condition, because of the misery to which they are exposed in the future world. This will be obvious, if we consider,

1. How great the misery is of which they are in danger;

2. How great is their danger of this misery.

1. How great the misery is of which they are in danger. It is great in two respects; 1. The torment and misery are great in themselves; and, 2. They are of endless duration.

1. The torment and misery, of which natural men are in danger, are exceedingly great in themselves. They are great beyond any of our words or thoughts. When we speak of them, our words are swallowed up. We say they are great, and exceedingly great, and very dreadful. But when we have used all the words we can to express them, how faint is the idea, that is raised in our minds in comparison with the reality! This misery will appear very dreadful, if we consider what calamities meet together in it. In it the wicked are deprived of all good, separated from God and all fruits of his mercy. In this world they enjoy many of the streams of God's goodness. But in the future world they will have no more smiles of God, no more manifestations of his mercy by benefits, by warnings, by calls and invitations. He will never more manifest his mercy by the exercise of patience and long suffering, by waiting to be gracious; no more use any forbearance with them for their good; no more exercise his mercy by strivings of his spirit, by sending messengers and using means. They will have no more testimonies of the fruits of God's goodness in enjoying food and raiment, and comfortable dwellings and convenient accommodations, nor any of the comforts of this life; no more manifestations of his mercy by suffering them to draw near to him with their prayers, to pray for what they need. God will exercise no pity towards them, no regard for their welfare. Cut off from all the comforts of this life, shut out of heaven, they will see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven; but they shall be turned away from God and from all good into the blackness of darkness, into the pit of hell, into that great receptacle,

which God has provided on purpose to cast into it the filthy, and polluted, and abominable of the universe. They will be in a most dreadful condition; they will have no friends. God will be their enemy, angels and the spirits of the just will be their enemies, devils and damned spirits will be their enemies. They will be hated with perfect hatred, will have none to pity them, none to bemoan their case, or to be any comfort to them. It appears that the state of the damned will be exceedingly dreadful in that they will suffer the wrath of God, executed to the full upon them, poured out without mixture. They shall bear the wrath of the Almighty. They shall know how dreadful the wrath of an almighty God is. Now none knows, none can conceive. Psalms xc. 11. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger?" Then they shall feel the weight of God's wrath. In this world they have the wrath of God abiding on them, but then it will be executed upon them; now they are the objects of it, but then they will be the subjects of it. Now it hangs over them, but then it shall fall upon them in its full weight without any alleviation, or any moderation or restraint. Their souls and their bodies shall then be filled full with the wrath of God. Wicked men shall be as full of wrath as any thing that glows in the midst of a furnace is of fire. The wrath of God is infinitely more dreadful than fire. Fire, yea the fiercest fire is but an image and shadow of it. The vessels of wrath shall be filled up with wrath to the brim. Yea, they shall be plunged into a sea of wrath. And therefore hell is compared to a lake of fire and brimstone, because there wicked men are overwhelmed, and swallowed up in wrath, as men, who are cast into a lake or sea, are swallowed up in water. O who can conceive of the dreadfulness of the wrath of an almighty God! Every thing in God is answerable to his infinite greatness. When God shows mercy, he shows mercy like a God. His love is infinitely desirable, because it is the love of God. And so when he executes wrath it is like a God. This, God will pour out without mixture. Revelations xiv. 10. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." No mixture of mercy or pity; nothing thrown into the cup of wrath to assuage or moderate it. "God shall cast upon him and not spare." Job xxvii. 22. They shall be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, where they shall be pressed down with wrath, as grapes are pressed in a wine-press. Rev. xiv. 19. "Cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God." God will then make appear in their misery how terrible his wrath is, that men and angels may know how much more dreadful the wrath of God is, than the wrath of kings, or any creatures. They shall know what God can do towards his enemies, and how fearful a thing it is to provoke him to anger.

If a few drops of wrath do sometimes so distress the minds of men in this world, so as to be more dreadful than fire, or any bodily torment, how dreadful will be a deluge of wrath; how dreadful will it be, when all God's mighty waves and billows of wrath pass over them! Every faculty of the soul shall be filled with wrath, and every part of the body shall be filled with fire. After the resurrection the body shall be cast into that great furnace, which shall be so great as to burn up the whole world. These lower heavens, this air and this earth, shall all become one great furnace, a furnace that shall burn the earth, even to its very centre. In this furnace shall the bodies of the wicked lie to all eternity, and yet live, and have their sense of pain and torment not at all diminished. O, how full will the heart, the vitals, the brain, the eyes, the tongue, the hands and the feet be of fire; of this fire of such an inconceivable fierceness! How full will every member, and every bone, and every vein, and every sinew, be of this fire? Surely it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Who can bear such wrath? A little of it is enough to destroy us. Psalms ii. 12. "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little." But how will men be overwhelmed, how will they sink, when God's wrath is executed in so dreadful a degree! The misery which the damned will endure, will be their perfect destruction. Psalms l. 22. "Now consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

In several places the wicked are compared to the stubble, and to briers and thorns before devouring flames, and to the fat of lambs, which consumes into smoke. Psalms xxxvii. 20. "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." They shall be as it were ground to powder under the weight of God's wrath. Matthew xxi. 44. Their misery shall be perfect misery; and because damnation is the perfect destruction of a creature, therefore it is called death. It is eternal death, of which temporal death, with all its awful circumstances, is but a faint shadow. The struggles, and groans, and gasps of the body when dying, its pale awful visage when dead, its state in the dark grave when it is eaten with worms, are but a faint shadow of the state of the soul under the second death. How dreadful the state of the damned is, we may argue from the desert of sin. One sin deserves eternal death and damnation, which in the least degree of it, is the total destruction of the creature. How dreadful, then, is the misery of which natural persons are in danger, who have lived some time in the world, and have committed thousands and thousands of sins, and have filled up many years with a course of sinning, and have committed many great sins, with high aggravations, who have sinned against the glorious gospel of

Christ, and against great light, whose guilt is far more dreadful than that of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah? How dreadful is the punishment, to which they are exposed, in which all their sins shall be punished according to their desert, and the uttermost farthing shall be exacted of them! The punishment of one idle word, or sinful thought, would be more than they could bear. How then will they bear all the wrath that shall be heaped upon them for all their multiplied and aggravated transgressions? If one sin deserves eternal death and damnation, how many deaths and damnations will they have accumulated upon them at once! Such an aggravated, multiplied death must they die every moment, and always continue dying such a death, and yet never be dead. Such misery as this may well be called the blackness of darkness. Hell may well be called the bottomless pit, if the misery is so unfathomably great. Men sometimes have suffered extreme torment in this world. Dreadful have been the sufferings of some of the martyrs; but how little those are, in comparison of the sufferings of the damned, we may learn from 1 Peter iv. 16, 17, 18. "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God; and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of those, that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" The apostle is here speaking of the sufferings of Christians; and from thence he argues, that seeing their sufferings are so great, how unspeakably great will be the sufferings of the wicked? And if judgment begins with them, what shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel! As much as to say, the sufferings of the righteous are nothing to what those, who obey not the gospel, are. How dreadful, therefore, does this argue their misery to be? Well may the sinners in Zion be afraid, and fearful, and surprised. Well may the kings of the earth, and the great men, and rich men, and chief captains, and every bond man, and every free man, hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, at Christ's second coming; and cry and say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him, that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand? Well may there be weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell, where there is such misery. Thus the misery of those who are in a natural condition, is, in itself, exceedingly great.

2. It is of endless duration. The misery is not only amazingly great, and extreme, but of long continuance; yea, of infinitely long continuance. It never will have any end. There will be no deliverance, no rest, no hope; but they will last throughout all eternity. Eternity is a thing, in the thought of which our minds are swallowed up. As it is infinite in itself, so it is infinitely beyond the

comprehension of our minds. The more we think of it, the more amazing will it seem to us. Eternity is a duration, to which a long period of time bears no greater proportion than a short period. A thousand years, or a thousand ages, bear no greater proportion to eternity than a minute; or which is the same thing, a thousand ages are as much less than eternity as a minute. A minute comes as near an equality to it; or you may take as many thousand ages out of eternity, as you can minutes. If a man by the utmost skill in arithmetic, should denote or enumerate a great number of ages, and should rise by multiplication to ever so prodigious numbers, should make as great figures as he could, and rise in multiplying as fast as he could, and should spend his life in multiplying; the product of all would be no nearer equal to the duration, which the wicked must spend in the misery of hell, than one minute. Eternity is that, which cannot be made less by subtraction. If we take from eternity a thousand years or ages, the remainder is not the less for it. Eternity is that, which will for ever be but beginning, and that because all the time which is past, let it be ever so long, is but a point to what remains. The wicked, after they have suffered millions of ages, will be, as it were, but in the first point, only setting out in their sufferings. It will be no comfort to them that so much is gone, for they will have none the less to bear. There will never a time come, when, if what is past, is compared to what is to come, it will not be as a point, and as nothing. The continuance of their torment cannot be measured out by revolutions of the sun, or moon, or stars, by centuries or ages. They shall continue suffering after these heavens and this earth shall wax old as a garment, till the whole visible universe is dissolved. Yea, they shall remain in their misery through millions of such ages as are equal to the age of the sun, and moon, and stars, and still it will be all one, as to what remains, still no nearer the end of their misery. Matthew xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Mark ix. 44. "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." Revelation xx. 10. "They shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever." And xiv. 11. "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." The damned in hell in their misery, will be in absolute despair. They shall know that their misery will have no end, and therefore they will have no hopes of it. O, who can conceive the dreadfulness of such despair as this in the midst of such torment! Who can express, or think any thing how dreadful the thought of eternity is to them, who are under so great torment! To what unfathomable depths of wo will it sink them! With what a gloom, and blackness of darkness will it fill them! What a boundless gulf of sorrow and wo is the thought of eternity to the damned, who shall be in absolute and utter despair of any deliverance!

How dreadful, then, is the condition of those, who are in a natural state, who are in danger of such misery.

2. The dreadfulness of their condition will appear by considering how great their danger is of this misery. This will be obvious from the following things:

1. Their danger is such, that continuing in their present state, they will unavoidably sink into this misery.

1. The state, in which natural persons now are, naturally tends to it. And this, because they are separate from God, and destitute of any spiritual good. The soul, that is in a state of separation from its Creator, must be miserable, because he is separate from the fountain of all good. He, that is separate from God, is in great danger of ruin, because he is without any defence. He that is separate from God, must perish, if he continue so, because it is from God only, that he can have those supplies which can make him happy. It is with the soul, as it is with the body. The body without supplies of sustenance will miserably famish, and die. So the souls of natural men are in a famishing condition. They are separate from God, and therefore are destitute of any spiritual good, which can nourish the soul, or keep it alive; like one, that is remote in a wilderness, where he has nothing to eat or drink, and therefore, if he continue so, will unavoidably die. So the state of natural men naturally tends to that dreadful misery of the damned in hell, because they are separate from God.

2. They are under the power of a mortal disease, which, if it be not healed, will surely bring them to this death. They are under the power and dominion of sin, and sin is a mortal disease of the soul. If it is not cured, it will certainly bring them to death; viz. to that second death of which we have heard. The infection of the disease has powerfully seized their vital parts. The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. The disease is inveterate. The infection is spread throughout the whole frame; the very nature is corrupted and ruined; and the whole must come to ruin, if God by his mighty power does not heal the disease. The soul is under a mortal wound; a wound deep and dreadfully confirmed. Its roots reach the most vital parts; yea, they are principally seated there. There is a plague upon the heart, which corrupts and destroys the source of life, ruins the whole frame of nature, and hastens an inevitable death. There is a most deadly poison, which has been infused into, and spread over, the man. He has been bitten by a fiery serpent, whose bite issues in a most tormenting death. Sin is that, which does as naturally tend to the misery and ruin of the soul, as the most mortal poison tends to the death of the body. We look upon persons far gone in a consumption, or with an incurable cancer, or some such malady, as in doleful circumstances. But that mortal disease, under whose

power natural men are, makes their case a thousand times more doleful. That mortal disease of natural men, does, as it were, ripen them for damnation. We read of the clusters of the vine of the earth being for the wine-press of the wrath of God. Revelation xiv. 18, where by the clusters of the vine are meant wicked men. The wickedness of natural men tends to sink them down to hell, as the weight of a stone causes it to tend towards the centre of the earth. Natural men have, as it were, the seeds of hell within their own hearts. Those principles of sin and corruption, which are in them, if they remain unmortified, will at length breed the torment of hell in them, and that necessarily, and of their own tendency. The soul that remains under the power of sin will at length take fire of itself. Hell will kindle in them.

2. If they continue in their present state, this misery appears to be unavoidable, if we consider the justice and truth of God.

1. If they continue in their present condition, so surely as God is just, they shall suffer the eternal misery of which we have heard. The honour of God's justice requires it, and God will not disparage his own justice. He will not deny his own honour and glory, but will glorify himself on the wicked, as well as the godly. He will not lose his honour of any one of his creatures, which he has made.

It is impossible that God should be frustrated or disappointed. And, so surely as God will not be frustrated, so surely shall they, who continue in a natural condition, suffer that eternal misery, of which we have heard. The avenging justice of God is one of the perfections of his nature, and he will glorify all his perfections. God is unalterable in this as well as his other perfections. His justice shall and must be satisfied. He has declared that he will by no means clear the guilty. Exodus xxxiv. 7; and that he will not justify the wicked. Exodus xxiii. 7. And that he will not at all acquit the wicked. Nahum i. 3. God is a strictly just Judge. When men come to stand before him, he will surely judge them according to their works. They that have guilt lying upon them, he will surely judge according to their guilt. The debt, they owe to justice, must be paid to the uttermost farthing. It is impossible, that any one, who dies in his sins, should escape everlasting condemnation and punishment before such a judge. He will render to every man according to his deeds; Romans ii. 8. "Unto them, that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man, that doeth evil." It is impossible to influence God to be otherwise than just in judging ungodly men. There is no bribing him. He accepteth not the person of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor. Deut. x. 17. "He regardeth not persons, nor taketh re-

ward." It is impossible to influence him to be otherwise than strictly just, by any supplications, or tears, or cries. God is inexorably just. The cries and the moans of the malefactor will have no influence upon this Judge to pass a more favourable judgment on them, so as in any way to acquit or release them. The eternal cries, and groans, and lamentations of the wicked, will have no influence upon him. Though they are ever so long continued, they will not prevail upon God.

2. So surely as God is true, if they die in the state they are now in, they shall suffer that eternal misery. God has threatened it in a positive and absolute manner. The threatenings of the law are absolute; and they, who are in a natural state, are under the condemnation of the law. The threatening of the law takes hold upon them: and if they continue under guilt, God is obliged by his word to punish them according to that threatening. And he has often, in the most positive and absolute manner, declared that the wicked shall be cast into hell; that they who believe not shall be damned; that they shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; and that their misery shall never have an end. And therefore, if there be any truth in God, it shall surely be so. It is as impossible that he, who dies in a natural condition, should escape suffering that eternal misery, as that God should lie. The word of God is stronger and firmer than mountains of brass, and shall not fail. We shall sooner see heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or tittle of all, that God hath said in his word, not be fulfilled. So much for the first thing, that evinces the greatness of the danger, that natural men are in of hell; viz. that they will unavoidably sink into hell, if they continue in such a condition.

2. Their danger will appear very dreadful, if we consider how uncertain it is, whether they will ever get out of this condition. It is very uncertain whether they will ever be converted. If they should die in their present condition, their misery is certain and inevitable. But it is very doubtful whether they will not die in such a condition. There is great danger that they will; great danger of their never being converted. And this will appear, if we consider two things.

1. They have nothing on which to depend for conversion. They have nothing in the world, by which to persuade themselves, that they shall ever be converted. Left to themselves, they never will repent and turn to God. If they are ever converted, therefore, it is God who must do it. But they have no promise of God, that they ever shall be converted. They do not know how soon they may die. God has not promised them long life; and he has not promised them that they shall be ready for death before they die. It is but a peradventure, whether God will ever give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. 2 Timothy ii.

25. Their resolutions are not to be depended on. If they have convictions, they are not to be depended on; they may lose those convictions. Their conversion depends on innumerable uncertainties. It is very uncertain then, whether they will be converted before they die.

2. Another thing which shows the danger there is that they shall never be converted, is, that there are but few comparatively, who are ever converted. But few of those, who have been natural persons in time past, have been converted. Most of them have died unconverted. So it has been in all ages, and hence we have reason to think that but few of them, who are unconverted now, will ever be converted; that most of them will die unconverted; and will go to hell. Natural persons are ready to flatter themselves, that they shall be converted. They think there are signs of it. But a man would not run the venture of so much as a sixpence in such an uncertainty as they are, about their ever being converted, or not going to hell. This shows the doleful condition of natural men, as it is uncertain whether they shall ever be converted.

3. They, who are in a natural condition, are in danger of going to hell every day. Those now present, who are in a natural condition, are in danger of dropping into hell before to-morrow morning. They have nothing to depend on, to keep them out of hell one day, or one night. We know not what a day may bring forth. God has not promised to spare them one day; and he is every day angry with them. The black clouds, that are full of the thunder of God's wrath, hang over their heads every day, and they know not how soon the thunder will break forth upon their heads. Natural men are in scripture compared to those that walk in slippery places. They know not when their feet will slip. They are continually in danger. Psalms lxxiii. 18. "Surely, thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment." Natural men hang over the pit of hell, as it were, by a thread, that has a moth continually gnawing it. They know not when it will snap in twain, and let them drop. They are in the utmost uncertainty; they are not secure one moment. A natural man never goes to sleep, but that he is in danger of waking in hell. Experience abundantly teaches the matter to be so. It shows, by millions of instances, that man is not certain of life one day. And how common a thing is it for death to come suddenly and unexpectedly! And thousands, beyond all reasonable question, are going to hell every day, and death comes upon them unexpectedly. "When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." It is a dreadful condition that natural persons

are in upon this account; and no wise person would be in their condition for a quarter of an hour for the whole world, because such is the danger that they will drop into hell before that quarter of an hour is expired.

Thus I have shown how dreadful the condition of natural men is, relatively considered. I shall mention two or three things more, which yet further make it appear how doleful their condition is.

1. The longer it continues, the worse it grows. This is an awful circumstance in the condition of a natural man. Any disease is looked upon as the more dreadful, for its growing and increasing nature. Thus a cancer and gangrene are regarded as dreadful calamities, because they continually grow and spread; and the faster they grow, the more dreadful are they accounted. It would be dreadful to be in a natural condition, if a person could continue as he is, and his condition grow no worse; if he could live in a natural condition, and never have it any more dreadful, than when he first begins to sin. But it is yet much more dreadful, when we consider that it every day becomes worse and worse. The condition of natural men is worse to-day than it was yesterday, and that on several accounts. The heart grows more and more polluted and hardened. The longer sin continues unmortified, the more is it strengthened and rooted. Their guilt also grows greater, and hell every day grows hotter; for they are every day adding sin to sin, and so their iniquity is increasing over their heads more and more. Every new sin adds to the guilt. Every sin deserves eternal death for its punishment. And therefore in every sin, that a man commits, there is so much added to the punishment, to which he lies exposed. There is, as it were, another eternal death added to augment his damnation. And how much is added to the account in God's book every day; how many new sins are set down, that all may be answered for; each one of which sins must be punished, that by itself would be an eternal death! How fast do wicked men heap up guilt, and treasure up wrath, so long as they continue in a natural condition! How is God more and more provoked, his wrath more and more incensed; and how does hell-fire continually grow hotter and hotter! If a man has lived twenty years in a natural condition, the fire has been increased every day since he has lived. It has been, as it were, blown up to a greater and greater degree of fierceness. Yea, how dreadfully does one day's continuance in sin, add to the heat of hell-fire!

2. All blessings are turned into curses to those, who live and die in such a condition. Those things, which are most pleasant and comfortable, and which men esteem the blessings of life, are but curses unto such; as their meat, and their drink, and their raiment. There is a curse goes with every mouthful of meat, and every drop of drink to such a person. There is a curse with his

raiment which he puts on; it all contributes to his misery. Though it may please him, yet it does him no good, but he is the more miserable for it. If he has any enjoyment which is sweet and pleasant to him, the pleasure is a curse to him; he is really the more miserable for it. It is an occasion of death to him. His possessions, which he values himself upon, and sets his heart upon, are turned into a curse to him. His house has the curse of God upon it, and his table is a snare and a trap to him. Psalms lxix. 22. His bed has God's curse upon it. When he lies down to sleep, a curse attends his rest; and when he goes forth to labour, he is followed with a curse on that. The curse of God is upon his fields, on his corn, and herds, and all he has. If he has friends and relations, who are pleasant and dear to him, they are no blessings to him. He receives no comfort by them, but they prove a curse to him. I say it is thus with those who live and die in a natural condition. Deuteronomy xxviii. 16, &c. "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket, and thy store. Cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, and the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me." Man's faculties of reason and understanding, and all his natural powers, are turned into a curse. Yea, spiritual mercies and privileges shall also be turned into a curse to those who live and die in a natural condition. A curse goes with the worship of God, and with sabbaths and sacraments, with instruction, and counsels, and warnings, and with the most precious advantages. They are all turned into a curse. They are a savour of death unto death. They do but harden the heart, and aggravate the guilt and misery, and inflame the divine wrath. Isaiah vi. 9, 10. "Go, make the heart of this people fat." 2 Cor. ii. 16. "To the one we are the savour of death unto death." It will only be an occasion of their misery, that God ever sent Christ into the would to save sinners. That which is in itself so glorious a manifestation of God's mercy, so unspeakable a gift, that which is an infinite blessing to others who receive Christ, will be a curse unto them. 1 Peter ii. 8. "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence." The blood of Christ, which is the price of eternal life and glory to some, is an occasion of sinking them vastly the lower into eternal burnings. And that is the case of such persons; the more precious any mercies are in themselves, the more of a curse are they to them. The better the things are in themselves, the more will they contribute to their

misery. And spiritual privileges, which are in themselves greater mercies than any outward enjoyments, will above all other things, prove a curse to them. Nothing will enhance their condemnation so much as these. On account of these, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them. Yea, so doleful is the condition of natural men, that if they live and die in that condition, not only the enjoyments of life, but life itself will be a curse to them. The longer they live, the more miserable will they be; the sooner they die, the better. If they live long in such a condition, and die in it at last, it would have been better for them, if they had died before. It would have been far better for them to have spent the time in hell, than on earth; yea better for them to have spent ten thousand years in hell, instead of one on earth. When they look back, and consider what enjoyments they have had, they will wish they had never had them. Though when on earth they set their hearts on their earthly enjoyments, they will hereafter wish they had been without them; for they will see they have only fitted them for the slaughter. They will wish they never had had their houses and lands, their garments, their earthly friends, their earthly possessions. And so they will wish that they had never enjoyed the light of the gospel, that they had been born among the heathen in some of the most dark and barbarous places of the earth. They will wish that Christ had never come into the world to die for sinners, so as to give men any opportunity to be saved. They will wish that God had cast off fallen man, as he did the fallen angels, and had never made him the offer of a Saviour. They will wish that they had died sooner, and had not had so much opportunity to increase their guilt, and their misery. They will wish they had died in their childhood, and been sent to hell then. They will curse the day that ever they were born, and wish they had been made vipers and scorpions, or any thing, rather than rational creatures.

3. They have no security from the most dismal horrors of mind in this life. They have no security, but their stupidity. A natural man can have no comfort or peace in a natural condition, but that of which blindness and senselessness are the foundation. And from what has been said, that is the very evil. A natural man can have no comfort in any thing in this world any further, than thought, and consideration of mind are kept down in him; as you make a condemned malefactor senseless of his misery by putting him to sleep with opium, or make him merry just before his execution by giving him something to deprive him of the use of reason, so that he shall not be sensible of his own circumstances. Otherwise, there is no peace or comfort, which a natural man can have in a natural condition. Isaiah xlviii. 22. "There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." Job xv. 20. "The wicked man

travaileth with pain all his days. A dreadful sound is in his ears." The doleful state of a natural man appears especially from the horror and amazement, to which he is liable on a death-bed. To have the heavy hand of God upon one in some dangerous sickness, which is wasting and consuming the body, and likely to destroy it, and to have a prospect of approaching death, and of soon going into eternity, there to be in such a condition as this: to what amazing apprehensions must the sinner be liable! How dismal must his state be, when the disease prevails, so that there is no hope that he shall recover, when the physician begins to give him over, and friends to despair of his life; when death seems to hasten on, and he is at the same time perfectly blind to any spiritual object, altogether ignorant of God, of Christ, and of the way of salvation, having never exercised one act of love to God in his life, or done one thing for his glory; having then every lust and corruption in its full strength; having then such enmity in the heart against God, as to be ready to dethrone him, if that were possible; having no right in God, or interest in Christ; having the terrible wrath of God abiding on him; being yet the child of the devil, entirely in his possession and under his power; with no hope to maintain him, and with the full view of never ending misery just at the door. What a dismal case must a natural man be in under such circumstances! How will his heart die within him at the news of his approaching death, when he finds that he must go, that he cannot deliver himself, that death stands with his grim countenance looking him in the face, and is just about to seize him, and carry him out of the world, and that he at the same time has nothing to depend on. How often are there instances of dismal distress of unconverted persons on a death-bed. No one knows the fears, the exercise and torment in their hearts, but they who feel them. They are such that all the pleasures of sin, which they have had in their whole lives, will not pay them for. As you may sometimes see godly men go triumphing out of the world full of joy, with the foretastes of heaven, so sometimes wicked men, when dying, anticipate something of hell before they arrive there. The flames of hell do, as it were, come up and reach them in some measure, before they are dead. God then withdraws, and ceases to protect them; the tormentor begins his work, while they are alive. Thus it was with Saul and Judas; and there have been many other similar instances since; and none, who are in a natural condition, have any security from it. The state of a natural man is doleful on this account, though this is but a prelude and foretaste of the everlasting misery which follows.

Thus I have, in some measure, shown in what a doleful condition those are, who are in a natural condition. Still I have said but little. It is beyond what we can speak or think. They, who say

most of the dreadfulness of a natural condition, say but little. And they, who are most sensible, are sensible of but a small part of the misery of a natural state.

APPLICATION.

I. We may derive from this Doctrine much useful and practical instruction.

1. Hence we may learn the stupidity and sottishness of many natural persons. If we consider those things, which we have now heard concerning their dreadful condition, and then see how the greater part of natural men behave themselves, we may well be astonished, that there should be such stupidity in the heart of man. If we rightly considered it, we should be ready to cry out with astonishment. Their sottishness appears in the following things.

1. That though they are in such a dreadful condition, they can go about easy and quiet, and in little or no concern respecting it. What might rationally be expected of such persons? If it were a new thing to us, and we had heard there was a person in a particular town or country, of such a name, who was in this awful condition; who had no interest in his Creator, who had the wrath of almighty God abiding on him, that wrath which is great and terrible enough to make him miserable with devils in hell to all eternity; that he was a captive in the hands of the devil, was made his slave and was under his power and dominion; that his soul was a habitation of devils; that he was condemned to be cast into the lake that burneth with fire and brimstone, to drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and to suffer in an inexpressible, inconceivable extremity in both body and soul for ever and ever, without hope or end; to be liable to sink in this misery every day, and the longer he continued out of it, the worse his condition; the more dreadful the wrath, and the hotter the flames of hell; I say, supposing we had just now for the first time heard there was a person in this awful condition, how should we expect to see him behave himself? If he was in the exercise of his reason, should we not expect to see him trembling and quaking on account of his misery, with all the manifestations of continual terror and amazement, regardless of all things else, spending his days and nights in tears, and groans, and lamentations, crying for pity and help, crying with an exceedingly loud and bitter cry, crying to every one to pity him, and pray for him? Yea, how many are there in this dreadful condition, are easy and quiet, and appear to have nothing to trouble them! They go about the world without anxiety or alarm as if they had no more reason to be disquieted, than if

they had already secured their salvation. Though they are told how dreadful their condition is hundreds of times, their tranquillity is wholly undisturbed. They can sit and hear of its certainty and its nearness, of its dreadful nature, and its inconceivable degree; and then can go away with as quiet and easy hearts as they had before. There is no moving them by telling them of such things. They can sleep as quietly, and go about their business with as perfect unconcern. They can eat and drink and enjoy the pleasures of social life with no apparent load on their minds; and without being sensible of any thing in their circumstances, which should hinder them from such enjoyment. And not only so, but,

2. They can go about with a merry heart. There are many of them, who not only seem to be quiet in their minds, but they are very cheerful, as if all were well with them, and every thing smiled upon them; as if they were in happy circumstances, and had every thing as they desired; and are even disposed to be merry and sportive about their own condition and the dreadful realities of the future world. For their part they choose to take their ease and pleasure, and not disturb or molest themselves with such dark and melancholy thoughts, like the persons mentioned by Isaiah. "Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine, and we will fill ourselves with strong drink; and to-morrow shall be as this day, and much more abundant."

3. They are so senseless, that they do not think it worth their while to make any considerable effort to escape from this dreadful condition. They will not take half so much pains for it, as for a little wordly gain; and they do not think it worth the while even to ask God to deliver them from it. They think it too much labour to withdraw once or twice each day to ask God to be merciful to them, that they might not continue in their natural state. And they foolishly neglect the precious opportunities, which they enjoy to get into a better state. God gives them great advantages for it, and they are called upon, and warned, and exhorted to improve them. They are told what good opportunities they have, and the danger of letting them slip, but all is to no purpose. Thus persons will let slip the time of youth, which is a precious season to escape from their natural condition. So they will let slip a time of the moving of God's spirit in the place where they live. They act as if they had a wish to continue in the same state. They will put themselves so little out of the way to escape from it; they are so backward to deny themselves a little, or to make a little effort they seem to grudge it, and think it needless. If they have a great advantage put into their hands, it is to no purpose. They had as good be without it, as with it; for they have no heart to improve it. Proverbs xvii. 16. "Wherefore is there a price in the hand of a fool to get wisdom, seeing he hath no heart to it?"

4. Instead of using means to get into a better state, they are wilfully doing those things, which make it worse and worse. Instead of striving for deliverance, they are striving against it. They are provoking God more, and increasing their guilt, and hardening their hearts, and setting themselves farther and farther from conversion: and this too, when they are told, that the things, which they practise, have this tendency. They act, as if they wished to be sure never to be converted. Thus it is with innumerable multitudes. So exceedingly senseless and stupid are many natural persons.

2. Hence we need not wonder, that we are directed in scripture to strive and to be very earnest to be delivered from our natural condition. This is the direction, which God gives us from time to time. Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate." Matt. xi. 12. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence." Eccl. ix. 10. "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." 2 Peter i. 10. "Give diligence to make your calling and election sure." Hebrews vi. 18. "Fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." The direction which was given to Lot, relating to his flight out of Sodom, was designed for the direction of all, who are in a natural condition. Gen. xix. 17. "Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed." This doctrine shows us the reason, why persons should be directed in such a way as this to seek their salvation. That it is such a dreadful condition is reason enough why persons should thus vehemently strive, and be violent to get into a better state, and why they should haste for their lives, and flee from the wrath to come. If the case of natural men be, as we have heard, no wonder that they should have such advice given them, and that God expects that the pains which they take, and the endeavours they use for it, should be in some measure answerable to its importance. No wonder, that the jailer, when made sensible of his condition, should conduct himself as we have the account in the text. No wonder that he should be in such haste as not only to run in, but to spring, or leap in, to the place where Paul and Barnabas were, and fall down before them, and ask in such an earnest manner, "What must I do to be saved?" If he had not been indeed in a dreadful state, he would have acted like one distracted. But considering that he was in a natural condition, which is so dreadful, it was not the least wonder.

3. Hence we may learn how dismal are the effects, which the fall of man has brought upon the world. It has brought all mankind into this dreadful condition of which we have heard. The far greater part of those who live in this world, are in this state, and the greater part of those, who die in the world, die in this state. What a miserable world, therefore, is the world in which

we live! This world lies under a curse. God has denounced wo against it; and what an immeasurable amount of wo is brought upon it! What woful devastation has sin made in the world!

II. What has been said of the dreadfulness of their condition may well awaken and terrify the impenitent. How many things are there in your circumstances, which are awful and terrible to think of. There is no one of those things which have been mentioned, but that the thought of it may well be frightful to you. It may well be a dreadful thought that you have no goodness in you, nor have ever done any thing which has the least goodness in it; that you never exercised one act of love, or true thankfulness, or obedience to God in your life; nor ever did the least thing out of true respect to God. The consideration of the dreadful depravity and wickedness of your heart, may well be frightful to you; to think what a sink of corruption it is, how full of all manner of wickedness, how full of enmity against God; to think that there are the same corruptions in your heart, as in the heart of the devil, and that there are the seeds of the same enmity against God, and that you are in the very image of the devil. If you look into your own heart, and strictly examine what it would entice you to do, if all restraints of fear and self-interest were taken off, it might well affright you. How awful may the thought well be to you, when you consider that you are a creature, separated from your Creator; that there is an alienation between you and that great Being, in whom you live, and move, and have your being; that you are a poor desolate creature, that have no God to protect you, and guide you, and provide for you in the world; and that you are secure from no manner of mischief, into which human nature is capable of falling, either in soul or body! How terrifying should it be to you, to think how good, how mighty and terrible that God is, under whose wrath you lie down and rise up, and eat and drink, and engage in the daily business of life! How frightful should it be to you, when you consider in what relation you stand to the devil; that you are his child, and that he owns you; that you are his servant, his possession, and that your heart is his dwelling place; that you are without Christ, and so without hope, and have no good thing in another world, in which you have any inheritance! And how amazing may it well be to you, when you consider how great that future misery is to which you are exposed and condemned, wherein God shows his wrath, and makes his power known in the destruction of the ungodly, in which they are vessels of wrath filled to the brim; and that you are in danger of being plunged in a bottomless gulf or deluge of wrath, where mighty waves and billows of wrath shall pass over you; and when you consider the torment of your body in that great furnace of fire, where every part, every organ, every vein, and

every limb shall be filled full of fire, and yet full of quick sense, and that this torment shall remain to an endless duration, a duration which shall always be beginning, but never ending! And how well may it affright you, and strike a terror upon you, when you consider, that if you die in your present condition, it is as impossible that you should escape this misery, as that God should cease to be just and true; and that the greater part of those who are in your condition will suffer this misery, and that you have no security that you shall be kept from it one day, or one hour! How terrifying may it well be to you, when you consider how much more dreadful your case continually grows! How frightful may it be to you every night, when you sit down, and consider how much greater your guilt is, and how much deeper your condemnation is than it was in the morning! How awful and doleful may it be to you to consider, that if you live and die in your present state, every thing is cursed to you; even your greatest mercies and best enjoyments, your food, your raiment, your nearest friends, and your earthly possessions: and not only so, but the light of the gospel, and the means of grace, and life itself will be cursed to you! All will be but an occasion of your greater misery. Such persons shall wish they had been born and brought up among the heathen. They shall wish that Christ had never come into the world; they shall wish they had never been born. How awful may it be to you when you think that death will most certainly come upon you, and you know not how soon: and what dismal circumstances you would be in, if you were in your present condition on a death-bed! How many things are there in your case which are of a terrifying, awful nature! How can you live in such circumstances, without living in continual terror? Here consider further the following things:

1. There is nothing which you see, but what may justly minister torment to you, while you remain in a natural condition. If you lift up your eyes, and behold the sun, moon, and stars, and cast your eyes abroad on the face of the earth, and see the mountains, and fields, and trees, it may justly put you in mind of the dolefulness of your condition; that the great God, who made all these things, who stretched forth the heavens as a curtain, who ordained the sun, moon, and stars, and laid the foundations of the earth, and causes the grass and trees to grow; is a God in whom you have no interest, but who is continually angry with you, and that his wrath abides on you. So when you look on your own body, and consider how it is formed and contrived, it may be a frightful thing to you to consider, that he who made you is not at peace with you, and that you are the object of his displeasure. If you have pleasures and enjoyments, and are in flourishing circumstances, if you see the faces of your near friends and dear re-

lations, and look upon your children and other dear friends, and behold your costly possessions, these things may justly minister torment to you, while you are in a natural state. For consider, that you do not know but that all these things are given you in wrath. When you sit down to eat and drink, you may do it in torment, because you know not but this may be in wrath. When you lie down upon your beds, it may justly be in torment, for you do not know but you shall awake in hell. And when you awake in the morning, it may justly be with torment in your heart, to think you are still in that doleful condition. When you go forth to your daily labour, you have reason to go with a terrified heart; for you know not but you are followed with God's curse in all that to which you put your hands. Whatever dispensations of Providence you may have, all may justly put you in mind of the dolefulness of your condition. If you meet with afflictions, these may remind you that you have no God to pity you, and that a God, who is angry with you every day, sends these afflictions upon you. If you meet with prosperity, you may justly receive it with a sorrowful sense of the dolefulness of your state; for you know not but it is to fit you for the slaughter. If you hear of the death of others, it may justly terrify you, and put you in mind of your own mortality, and of your danger of dying as you now are. If you hear of others' conversion, it may justly renew in you a sense of the dolefulness of your own state, that you still remain unconverted. If you see the bible, an awful thought may justly go with the sight, that you have never yet received any good by that book, and that all the curses written in it, stand against you. Every time you enter the house of God, it may justly renew awful thoughts of your circumstances, that you have entered there so often, and obtained no good; entered so often, and gone away worse than you came. And what danger there is, that you shall be one of those spoken of in Ecclesiastes viii. 10. "I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone from the place of the holy, and they were forgotten in the city where they had so done." And wheresoever you turn yourself, whatever you meet with, and whatever you behold, or hear, may justly renew a sense of the dolefulness of your state. The thought of your condition may justly cast a darkness upon every thing.

2. Consider that the time will soon come, when you will be sensible that the dolefulness of your condition is as great as I have represented it; that I have not enlarged or magnified the matter, but that the case is as I have declared it. You will then see that it is so. Whether you are sensible of it now or not, yet in a little time you will surely be sensible, and will need no argument to convince you of it. Yea, you will be sensible that it is more doleful than I have represented. After all that has been told you now,

and at other times, the time will come, when you will say, that the one half was not told you.

3. Your condition is thus doleful, notwithstanding every thing with which you may flatter yourself. You may be ready to flatter yourself, that though the condition of some natural persons is thus doleful, yet yours is not; that you are in better circumstances than other natural men commonly are. Or particularly, you may flatter yourself, that you are not so bad as others; you do not find such dreadful corruptions in your heart, as you hear are in others. Herein you deceive yourself. It is because you are ignorant of your own heart. What has been said of the depraved state of natural men, of their blindness, their hardness, their deadness, all belongs to you. You may possibly flatter yourself that your condition is not so doleful, because you have always walked orderly, you have been moral and religious. Here also you deceive yourself. For notwithstanding your moral and religious behaviour, and all your sobriety, you never did the least thing from a gracious respect to God. You have a heart in the likeness of the heart of the devil. You are without God in the world. God is angry with you every day; his wrath is not at all appeased. You may flatter yourselves that you are the children of godly parents, that you have many godly friends, who may put up many prayers for you, and that your case is not so doleful on that account, and that your danger is not extremely great. But in this you miserably deceive yourself. You are children of the devil notwithstanding all this. If you die in your present condition, it is impossible that you shall escape eternal misery. And there is great danger, that you will die in it. You have no security that you shall not be in hell before to-morrow morning. Do not flatter yourself from such things as these, that you are not in a doleful condition. Some of those who flatter themselves most, and think their condition the least doleful, are indeed in the most doleful condition. It is more dreadful than their neighbours; more so than that of many, whom they esteem ten times worse than themselves. And this is one thing, which adds to the dolefulness of their condition, that they so flatter themselves, and think their state so good. So it was of old with the Scribes and Pharisees. Matthew xxi. 31. "Verily I say unto you, the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of God before you."

III. This subject may well excite joy and thankfulness in the hearts of the truly penitent, that God has found out a way to deliver them from such a condition; that God has been pleased to send his Son into the world to die for them; that he has given them the gospel and the means of grace; and that he has delivered them from this dreadful condition. You were in the same circumstances. 1 Cor. vi. 11. "Such were some of you; but ye are

washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." It is mere grace, which has made the difference. There is no cause of boasting. God might have taken others, and left you. You deserved no more than they. You had no more righteousness of your own. Probably you have done worse than many, who have eternally perished. Take heed, that you entertain no boasting thought, and that your joy in this be a humble joy; accompanied with continual praise to God, who has done such great things for you, and from all eternity set his love upon you.

IV. This subject should lead those, who are in a natural condition, earnestly to seek for deliverance. Will you rest in such a condition, when there is a way of salvation provided, and an opportunity for an escape? Will you of choice continue still in this state? Though your case is very dangerous, yet there is a possibility of rescue, if you have but a heart to improve your opportunity. But besides what has been said, I would desire you further to consider, how happy will be your state, should you obtain deliverance. A converted state is not less happy than a natural condition is miserable and dreadful. You will be brought out of darkness into marvellous light. It will be like the dawning of the morning after a long night of darkness. It will be a joyful morning to you. The day-star will arise in your heart. Then will be given you the morning star. You will then have a discovery of the glory of God, and the beauty and excellency of Jesus Christ made to your soul; and then will be opened to your view the glorious fountain of divine grace. You will then look back and see how you have dwelt in darkness throughout your lives, and in the region and shadow of death. Matthew iv. 16. "The people, which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them, which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." You will then be brought out of a dreadful bondage into glorious liberty. You will come forth, as from a dark dungeon, to see the glorious light of the Sun of righteousness. Your eyes will then be opened, and you will be brought out of the prison house. Isaiah lxi. 1. "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them, that are bound." Then you who were dead, will be made alive; and you that have been lost, will be found. What you will then obtain will richly repay you for all the labour which you have undergone. If you have spent ever so many years in wrestling with corruption and temptation, in striving to enter in at the strait gate, you will not repent it. But more particularly consider,

1. How glorious will be the alteration, made in your nature. Old things will be done away, and all things will become new. Sin will be mortified in you, and the glorious image of God conferred upon you. You will have holy and spiritual principles imparted to you, a spirit of divine love and heavenly mindedness, a relish for spiritual enjoyments, a delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, a truly meek, humble, charitable and benevolent spirit. You will be changed, from being more filthy and hateful than a reptile into the likeness of the glorious Son of God. You will be taken out of the mire of brutal lusts and spiritual abominations, will be washed from all your filthiness, and will be adorned with the most glorious ornaments; those ornaments of mind, which in the sight of God, are of great price, ornaments, which will render you a thousand times more beautiful and lovely than the robes of princes. You will obtain those graces of the spirit of God which are the ornaments of angels.

2. Consider the safety of the condition in which you will then be. The terrible wrath of the great God, which abides on wicked men, will then be removed from you. Christ will be to you as a hiding place from the storm, and as a shadow from the heat of God's wrath. You will then be safe from hell, and will be for ever delivered from that dreadful misery, which is endured by the damned, and to which you are now condemned. Revelation xx. 6. "On such the second death hath no power." You will be safe from the power of Satan. Christ will be your protector, so that you shall be out of his reach, that he will not be able to destroy you. You shall dwell on high. Your place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, where you may laugh at the power of the enemy. And though you are in a world full of enemies and sinners, yet God will be your Rock, and the most High God your Redeemer. God will carry you as on eagles' wings through the world, aloft out of the reach of your enemies. They may see you, and wish your ruin, and gnash their teeth, but shall not be able to accomplish it. Satan will desire to have you, but Christ will have prayed for you, and that will be your security. You will be safe from death; that will not be able to hurt you. Natural men are in continual danger from death. They know not when nor how death may come. But if it comes while they are in that condition, it sinks them into hell. But you need not be afraid to meet death, either by day or night. Whenever it comes, and in whatever form, you are safe. While others walk in slippery places, your feet will be established on a rock. In a time of sickness and mortality, while others tremble, you need not fear. If you are sick, you need not dread the issue. For though your flesh and your heart should fail you, yet God will be the strength of your heart, your present help, and your portion for ever. Though the

earth should be removed, you will be safe. Psalms xlvi. 1, 2, 3. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." If you are once in Christ Jesus, none shall ever pluck you out of his hands. John x. 28. "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." You will be freed from condemnation; for who is he that shall condemn you? it is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. Who shall separate you from the love of Christ? "Neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature." What a glorious foundation will there be for your peace and quietness! Isaiah xxxii. 17. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." Let this consideration, therefore, prompt you earnestly to seek, that you may obtain that happy condition. Can you consider how happy the change would be to you, how desirable such safety is, and not be willing earnestly to seek and do every thing which lies in your power, that you may obtain it?

3. Consider how exceedingly it will be for the comfort and pleasure of your life, if you are converted. You are not only under the greatest necessity to become converted, because a natural condition is so dreadful a condition, but you will gain by it every way. You will not only gain eternal life by it, but you will gain unspeakably by it while in this world. Your pains will be richly rewarded while here, though that be but little to your future reward. You cannot take a more direct course to make your life pleasant. You will obtain by it the most excellent delight and pleasure, in comparison with which the pleasures which are to be had in worldly things are low and vile. Hereby you may obtain the most substantial, soul-satisfying, soul-refreshing pleasures. You may then live a life of divine love and communion with that glorious Being, who is the object of your love. Then you will be blest with the best company, and with heavenly society. Far better is a little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasures with that trouble which wicked men have with their enjoyments. Then you may enjoy what God in his providence bestows upon you with peace of conscience; and may rejoice in it, as the fruit of the love of God. Then you may have the comfort of considering that you have God's blessing on what you possess. Your enjoyments will then be sweet to you, for you will enjoy God in the fruits of his bounty. Your life will be abundantly more pleasant in all the circumstances and concerns of it. It will make God's house a

more delightful resort; your own house a more pleasant residence, for then the blessing of heaven will rest upon it; and your closet a sweeter retirement. It will make your labour sweeter to you, and it will sweeten your rest. You may then say with the Psalmist, Psalms iv. 8. "I will both lay me down and sleep, for thou Lord, only makest me dwell in safety." It will tend to make your life pleasant, and to make your death-bed comfortable to you. When all other comforts fail, this will stand you instead. It will remain as a living spring, which will never fail. John iv. 14. "The water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." This will make time comfortable, and will make the thoughts of eternity comfortable to you, when you shall have those pleasures which are at God's right hand for ever, in more immediate prospect; and shall have that faithful promise of God, that hereafter you shall see God, and shall dwell in his presence, and shall, from the hands of Christ, receive a crown of life.

Direction 1. In general be directed to act as if you were in a dreadful condition; as one who looks upon his case to be dreadful, not merely as one looks upon his case undesirable and worse than that of another; but as one who is sensible that his state is inexpressibly dismal and terrible. Consider how men act when they apprehend their circumstances to be very dreadful, though only in temporal respects. As for instance: if they are in danger of being consumed by fire, or only having their substance consumed. Or if in danger of being seized by an enemy, or otherwise in danger of some dreadful evil. How do the thoughts of danger awake their powers! What earnestness appears in them, in what haste are they! Be directed to seek for deliverance from a natural condition, in like manner if you would be delivered. The jailer acted as one who was sensible that his condition was dreadful. So be you directed to act, if you would have the like success. Particularly,

1. Be in haste. The jailer, when he was made sensible of his dreadful condition, sprang into the presence of Paul and Silas and cried out what must I do to be saved? So you cannot be in too much haste. When ministers direct those who are seeking salvation to wait until God's time comes, if they understand the scriptures, they cannot mean, that they should not be in haste to obtain a better condition, or that they should be at rest, or continue in such a condition one hour, or one moment. They can only mean these two things: that you should wait or persevere in opposition to giving out in discouragement: and that they should wait in opposition to quarrelling with God for not delivering them, and not in opposition to being uneasy in a natural condition. For persons ought to be uneasy, and it argues awful stupidity

to be otherwise; but in opposition to a quarrelling spirit because God does not show mercy sooner. We should persevere in our efforts to obtain salvation as being sensible that God is not obliged to bestow it in our time, or at all; that he may, if he will, refuse to show mercy; and if he does show mercy, that he may do it in his own time. Remember that the command of Christ, to you is, "Repent and believe the Gospel." You cannot lawfully continue in your present state one day or hour. Those who defer and put off repentance till another time are not in a likely way to obtain deliverance. The way is, to improve the present time; to do now, what must be done ever. We should make securing our salvation our present and immediate business. Therefore inquire, whether you do not put it off. If you do not put off the whole of the work, yet do you not put off part of it? Do you think you now strive as much for salvation, as it will ever be needful that you should? If not, delay no longer. Let it not be said of you to-morrow, that there is any thing delayed to-day, which you yourself thought needful to be done, or in your power to do, in order to your salvation. If you are sensible that you are in this dreadful condition, you certainly will make haste; you will need no other motive to it.

2. Let nothing, which you do in seeking salvation, be done with slackness. The direction is, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Therefore, let nothing be done with a slack hand. Do every thing which you do in this great work earnestly. There are many things which you have to do; many duties to be performed, many means to be employed. Let all be done with your strength. Be earnest in prayer, earnest in hearing the word preached, diligent and faithful in watching over your own heart, diligent in searching your heart, diligent in reflecting on your past life, diligent and laborious in meditation, laborious and earnest in striving against temptation. And do not perform merely the duties of religion towards God earnestly, but also its duties towards your neighbour. Be earnest that you may do every duty required of you towards all men. Be earnest and diligent to do justly and honestly, and to render to every man his due. Be earnest to watch against an envious, malicious and revengeful spirit. Be earnest to do all the duties of charity: labour with your might, that you may behave charitably towards men, and neglect no duty of charity required of you. Be earnest in performing every relative duty: in rendering suitable honour to your parents; in manifesting kindness and confidence to your husband or your wife; in instructing and governing your children, bringing them up in religion, and seeking their salvation in every way pointed out in the scriptures. Do this earnestly,

and with all your strength. You should not merely do some things earnestly, but all.

3. Take heed lest this your earnestness be not transient; but that you continue in it to the end. It is the misery of many persons, that they seem to be very warmly engaged for a little time, but it does not last. It is a very rare thing, that any who are thoroughly and perseveringly in earnest for salvation, fail of it, unless they have put off the work until they are near death before they began. How unstable is the heart of man, and how many are there, who go to hell through backsliding! It is often the case when persons begin with much seeming earnestness, that they do it upon a secret dependence that they shall not need to make these efforts very long. They flatter themselves, that in a little time they shall obtain what they seek, and then they may take their ease; therefore, when they have gone on a while, and fail of that expectation, they soon slacken their exertions. They never consented to seek in this diligent persevering manner, always; but they appointed a time of their own, and sought it on terms of their own fixing. But a man is then in a hopeful way to be converted, when he has so great a sense of his misery, and his necessity of conversion, that he is disposed to do his utmost, to be violent for the kingdom of heaven, and to devote his life to it.

If you are seeking salvation, inquire how it is with you as to this matter. Do you feel a disposition in yourself to be at the pains and difficulty of a most laborious seeking God's grace in the denial of every lust, and in a painful performance of every duty as long as you live? Or does this seem to you to be too much; more than you can find a heart to comply with? You may be ready to say, that you could be willing to do all this, if you knew you should obtain at last. But that is not sufficient. You should be willing to run the venture of that, and seek upon what encouragement is given you, and to wait God's sovereign will and pleasure in that way. And if you cannot become willing for this, be sensible there is a defect in your manner of seeking; which it behoves you to mend. And do not think that you seek in the right way until you come to it. If you have a right sense of the dolefulness of your condition, it will bring you to it. Consider the great encouragement there is for this way of seeking. Proverbs viii. 34. "Blessed is the man, that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Hosea vi. 3. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord."

4. Seek, that you may be brought to lie at God's feet in a sense of your own exceeding sinfulness. Seek earnestly, that you may have such a sight of yourself; what an exceedingly sinful creature you are, what a wicked heart you have, and how dreadful you have provoked God to anger; that you may see that God would be

most just, if he should never have any mercy upon you. Labour, that all quarrelling about God's dispensations towards sinners may be wholly subdued; that your heart may be abased and brought down to the dust before God; that you may see yourself in the hands of God; and that you can challenge nothing of God, but that God and his throne are blameless in the eternal damnation of sinners, and would be in your damnation. Seek that you may be brought off from all high opinion of your own worth, all trust in your own righteousness, and to see that all you do in religion is so polluted and defiled, that it is utterly unworthy of God's acceptance; and that you commit sin enough in your best duties to condemn you for ever. Seek that you may come to see, that God is sovereign, that he is the Potter and you the clay, and that his grace is his own, and that he may bestow it on whom he will, and that he might justly refuse to show you mercy. Seek that you may be sensible, that God is sovereign as to the objects of his grace, and also as to the time and manner of bestowing it, and seek to God and wait upon him as a sovereign God. Seek that you may be sensible that God's anger is infinitely dreadful, yet, at the same time be sensible that it is just. Labour that when you have a sense of the awfulness of the wrath of God in your mind, you may fall down before an angry God, and lie in the dust. Seek that you may see, that you are utterly undone, and that you cannot help yourself; and yet, that you do not deserve that God should help you, and that he would be perfectly just, if he should refuse ever to help you. If you have come to this, then you will be prepared for comfort. When persons are thus humble, it is God's manner soon to comfort them. When you are thus brought low, doubtless God will soon lift you up. God will not bestow such a great and infinite mercy as eternal life upon persons, who will not acknowledge his sovereignty in that matter. When once there has been that conviction upon the heart which casts down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against God, then God is wont speedily to reveal his grace and love, and to pour the oil of comfort into the soul.

5. Abound in earnest prayer to God, that he would open your eyes, that you may behold the glorious and rich provision made for sinners in Jesus Christ. The souls of natural men are so blinded that they see no beauty or excellency in Christ. They do not see his sufficiency. They see no beauty in the work of salvation by him; and as long as they remain thus blind, it is impossible that they should close with Christ. The heart will never be drawn to an unknown Saviour. It is impossible, that a man should love that, and freely choose that, and rejoice in that, in which he sees no excellency. But if your eyes were opened to see the excellency of Christ, the work would be done. You would imme-

diately believe on him; and you would find your heart going after him. It would be impossible to keep it back. But take heed that you do not entertain a wrong notion of what it is, spiritually to see Christ. If you do, you may seek that, which God never bestows. Do not think that spiritually to see Christ, is to have a vision of him as the prophets had, to see him in some bodily shape, to see the features of his countenance. Do not pray or seek for any such thing as this. But what you are to seek is, that you may have a sight of the glorious excellency of Christ, and of the way of salvation through him, in your heart. This is a spiritual sight of Christ. This is that for which you must cry to God day and night. God is the fountain of spiritual light. He opens the eyes of the blind. He commands the light to shine out of darkness. It is easy with God to enlighten the soul, and fill it with these glorious discoveries, though it is beyond the power of men and angels.

SERMON II.

HOSEA v. 15.

I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.

IN the preceding part of the chapter is threatened the destruction of Ephraim. Ephraim, in the prophets, generally means the ten tribes, or the kingdom of Israel, as distinguished from the kingdom of Judah. When we read of Ephraim and Judah in the prophets, thereby is meant the whole people of Israel of the twelve tribes, as in verse 12, of this chapter. "Therefore will I be unto Ephraim as a moth, and to the house of Judah as rottenness." By Judah is meant the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, which were under the king of Judah; and by Ephraim is meant the ten tribes under the king of Israel. Ephraim is put for the whole kingdom of Israel, because Samaria, the seat of the kingdom, the royal city, was in that tribe. In the verse immediately preceding the text it is declared in what a terrible manner God was about to deal with Ephraim. "For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah; I, even I, will tear and go away, and none shall rescue him." In the text God declares how he would deal with them after he had torn as a lion, &c. And here,

1. God declares how he would withdraw from them. "I will go and return to my place;" when I have torn as a lion. I will go away; I will leave them in that condition. I will depart from them, and they shall see no more of me.

2. What God will wait for in them before he returns to them to show them mercy, there are three things here signified.

1. That they should be sensible of their guilt. "Till they acknowledge their offence." It is in the original, till they become guilty." That is, till they become guilty in their own eyes, till they are sensible of their guilt; in the same sense as the same expression is used in Romans iii. 19. "That every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God:" That is, become guilty in their own eyes.

2. That they would be sensible of their misery, implied in the expression, "in their affliction they shall seek me." Their calamity was brought upon them, before God had torn them, and left them. But in their pride and perverseness, they were not well sensible of their own miserable condition, as this prophet observes in chapter vii. 9.

3. That they should be sensible of their need of God's help, which is implied in their seeking God's face, and seeking him early; that is, with great care and earnestness. Before, they would not seek God; they were not sensible of their helplessness, as we learn in the verse but one preceding the text. "When Ephraim saw his sickness, and Judah his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrian, and sent to king Jacob." But as we are there told, he could not heal him, nor cure his wound. And notwithstanding all the help he could afford, God wounded him, tore him as a young lion; and, as he declares, would leave him, and he should cease going to any other, and should be sensible that no other could heal, and accordingly come to him for healing.

Doctrine. That it is God's manner to make men sensible of their misery and unworthiness, before he appears in his mercy and love to them.

I. That it is ordinarily thus with respect to the bestowment of great and signal mercies.

II. That it is particularly so with respect to revealing his love and mercy to their souls.

I. This is God's ordinary way before great and signal expressions of his mercy and favour. He very commonly so orders it in his providence, and so influences men by his Spirit, that they are brought to see their miserable condition as they are in themselves, and to despair of help from themselves, or from an arm of flesh, before he appears for them, and also makes them sensible of their sin, and their unworthiness of God's help. This appears from the account, which the scriptures give us of God's dealings with his people. Joseph before his great advancement in Egypt must lie in the dungeon to humble him, and prepare him for such honour and prosperity. The children of Jacob, before Joseph reveals himself to them, and they receive that joy and honour and prosperity, which were consequent thereupon, pass through a train of difficulties and anxieties, till at last they are reduced to distress, and are brought to reflect upon their guilt, and to say, that they were verily guilty concerning their brother. God humbled them in his providence, and then an end was put to all their difficulties, and their sorrow was turned into joy upon Joseph's revealing himself to them. Jacob, before he hears the joyful news of Joseph's

being yet alive, must be brought into great distress at the parting with Benjamin, and supposed loss of Simeon. He was reduced to great straits in his mind. He says in Genesis xlii. 36. "All these things are against me." But soon after this he had these gladsome tidings brought to him, "Joseph is yet alive, and he is governor over all the land of Egypt." And to confirm it, he sees the waggons and the noble presents, which Joseph sent to him: so that he was now brought to say, "It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive. I will go and see him before I die." And so with the children of Israel in Egypt. Their bondage must wax more and more extreme. Their bondage had been very extreme. But yet Pharaoh gives commandment that more work should be laid upon them, and the taskmasters tell them they must get their straw where they can find it; and nothing of their work should be diminished. And quickly upon this was their deliverance. So when the children of Israel were brought to the Red Sea, the Egyptians pursued them, and were just at their heels, and they were reduced to the utmost distress, they see that they must assuredly perish, unless God work a miracle for them; for they were shut up on all sides: the Red Sea was before them, and the army of the Egyptians encompassing them round behind. And they cried unto the Lord. And then God wonderfully appeared for their help, and made them pass through the Red Sea, and put songs of deliverance into their mouths.

So before God brought the children of Israel into Canaan, he led them about in a great and terrible wilderness through a train of difficulties and temptations for forty years, that he might teach them in their dependence on him, and the sinfulness of their own hearts. Deut. xxxii. 10. "He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye." God brought them into those trials and difficulties in the wilderness to humble them, and let them see what was in their hearts, that they might be convinced of their own perverseness by the many discoveries of it under those temptations, and so that they might be sensible that it was not for their righteousness that God made them his people, and gave them Canaan, seeing it was so evident that they were a stiff-necked people. Deut. viii. 2, 3. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by

bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doth man live." And 15, 16, 17. "Who led thee through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein were fiery serpents, and scorpions, and drought, where there was no water; who brought thee forth water out of the rock of flint; who fed thee in the wilderness with manna, which thy fathers knew not, that he might humble thee, and that he might prove thee, to do thee good at the latter end; and thou say in thine heart, my power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth." And so we have examples of this from time to time in the history of the Judges. When Israel revolted, God gave them into the hands of their enemies. He let them continue in their hands, till they were reduced to great distress, and saw that they were in a helpless condition, and were brought to reflect on themselves, and to cry unto the Lord. And then God raised them up a deliverer. And when they cried unto God, he would not deliver them till he had humbled them, and brought them to own their unworthiness, and to own that they were in God's hands. Judges x. beginning with the 10th verse. "And the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, saying, we have sinned against thee, both because we have forsaken our God, and also served Baalim. And the Lord said unto the children of Israel, did not I deliver you from the Egyptians, and from the Amorites, from the children of Ammon, and from the Philistines? The Zidonians also and the Amalekites, and the Maonites did oppress you; and ye cried to me, and I delivered you out of their hand. Yet ye have forsaken me, and served other gods; wherefore I will deliver you no more. Go, and cry unto the gods, which ye have chosen; let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation. And the children of Israel said unto the Lord, we have sinned; do thou unto us whatsoever seemeth good unto thee; deliver us only, we pray thee, this day. And they put away the strange gods from among them, and served the Lord; and his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel." And this is the method in which God declared from the beginning he would proceed with his people. Lev xxvi. 40, &c. "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked contrary unto me; and that I also have walked contrary unto them, and have brought them into the land of their enemies; if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, and also my covenant with Isaac, and also my covenant with Abraham will I remember; and I will remember the land. The land also shall be left of them, and shall enjoy her sab-

baths, while she lieth desolate without them; and they shall accept of the punishment of their iniquity; because, even because they despised my judgments, and because their soul abhorred my statutes. And yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them; for I am the Lord their God. But I will for their sakes remember the covenant of their ancestors, whom I brought forth out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the heathen, that I might be their God." It is God's manner, when he will bestow signal blessings in answer to prayer, to make men seek them, and pray for them with a sense of their sin and misery. As 1 Kings viii. 38, 39. "What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the plague of his own heart, and spread forth his hands toward this house; then hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways, whose heart thou knowest; for thou, even thou only, knowest the hearts of all the children of men." By knowing the plague of their own hearts is meant both their sin and misery. Being sensible of their misery is included, as is evident from the manner of expressing the same petition of Solomon's prayer, as it is related in 2 Chronicles vi. 29. "Then what prayer or supplication soever shall be made of any man, or of all thy people Israel, when every man shall know his own sore and his own grief." By which is probably meant his misery and his sin, which is the foundation of it. Paul gives us an account how God brought him to have despair in himself before a great deliverance, which he experienced. 2 Corinthians i. 9, 10. "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God, which raiseth the dead; who delivered us from so great a death." How did Christ humble the woman of Canaan, or bring her to the exercise and expression of a sense of her own unworthiness before he answered her, and healed her daughter! When she continued to cry, after he answered her not a word, and seemed to take no notice of her, and his disciples desired him to send her away, and when she continued crying after him he gave a very humbling answer, saying, it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And when she took it well, as owning that being called a dog was not too bad, and owning that she was therefore unworthy of children's bread, she only sought the crumbs, then Christ answered her request. And the experience of God's people in all ages corresponds with those examples. It is God's usual method before remarkable discoveries of his mercy and love to them, especially by spiritual

mercies, in a special manner to humble them, and make them sensible of their misery and helplessness in themselves, and of their vileness and unworthiness, either by some remarkably humbling dispensation of his providence or influence of his Spirit. We are come now,

II. To show particularly that it is God's manner to make men sensible of their misery and unworthiness before he reveals his saving love and mercy to their souls. The mercy of God, which he shows to a sinner when he brings him home to the Lord Jesus Christ, is the greatest and most wonderful exhibition of mercy and love, of which men are ever the subjects. There are other things, in which God greatly expresses his mercy and goodness to men, many temporal favours. The mercies already mentioned, which God bestowed upon his people of old: his advancing Joseph in Egypt, his deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, his leading them through the Red Sea on dry land, his bringing them into Canaan, and driving out the heathen from before them, his delivering them from time to time from the hands of their enemies, were great mercies; but they were not equal to this of bringing his people from under the guilt and dominion of sin. Several of them were typical of this; and as God would thus prepare men for the bestowment of those less mercies by making them sensible of their guilt and misery, so especially will he so do, before he makes known to them this great love of his in Jesus Christ. When God designs to show mercy to sinners, it is his manner thus to begin with him.

He first brings them to reflect upon themselves, and consider and be sensible what they are, and what condition they are in. What has already been said proves this. There is a harmony between God's dispensations. And as we see that this is God's manner of dealing with men when he gives them other great and remarkable mercies and manifestations of his favour, it is a confirmation that it is his method of proceeding with the souls of men, when about to reveal his mercy and love to them in Jesus Christ.

1. God makes men consider and be sensible of what sin they are guilty. Before, it may be, they were very regardless of this. They went on sinning, and never reflected upon what they did; never considered or regarded what or how many sins they committed. They saw no cause why they should trouble their minds about it. But when God convinces them, he brings them to reflect upon themselves; he sets their sins in order before their eyes. He brings their old sins to their minds, so that they are fresh in their memory—things which they had almost

forgotten. And many things, which they used to regard as light offences which were not wont to be a burden to their consciences, nor to appear worthy to be taken notice of, they are now made to reflect upon. Thus they discover of what a multitude of transgressions they have been guilty, which they have heaped up till they are grown up to heaven. There are some sins especially, of which they have been guilty, which are ever before them, so that they cannot get them out of their minds. Sometimes when men are under conviction, their sins follow them, and haunt them like a spectre. God makes them sensible of the sin of their hearts, how corrupt and depraved their hearts are. And there are two ways in which he does this. One is by setting before them the sins of their lives. They are so set in order before them, they appear so many and so aggravated, that they are convinced what a fountain of corruption there is in their hearts. Their sinful natures appear by their sinful lives. There is sin enough, which every man has committed, to convince him, that he is sold under sin, that his heart is full of nothing but corruption, if God by his spirit leads him rightly to consider it.

Another way, which God sometimes makes use of, is, to leave men to such internal workings of corruption under the temptations which they have in their terrors and fears of hell, as shows them what a corrupt and wicked heart they have. God sometimes brings this good out of this evil, to make men see the corruption of their nature by the workings of it under temptations, which they have in their terrors about damnation. God leads them through the wilderness to prove them, and let them know what is in their hearts, as he did the children of Israel, as we have already observed. By means of the trials, which the children of Israel had in the wilderness, they might be made sensible what a murmuring, perverse, rebellious, unfaithful and idolatrous people they were. So God sometimes makes sinners sensible what wicked hearts they have by their experience of the exercises of corruption, while they are under convictions. Not that this will in the least excuse men for allowing such workings of corruption in their hearts, because God sometimes leaves men to be wicked, that he may afterwards turn it to their good, when he in infinite wisdom sees meet so to do. We must not go and be wicked on purpose, that we may get good by it. It will be very absurd, as well as horridly presumptuous for us so to do. Though God sometimes in his sovereign mercy makes those workings of corruption, and a spirit of opposition and enmity against God, a means of showing them the vileness of their own hearts, and so to turn to their good. So

God oftentimes is provoked thereby utterly to withdraw and forsake them after the example of those murmurers, whose carcases fell in the wilderness, of whom God sware in his wrath that they should never enter into his rest. And they, who allow themselves therein are the most likely so to provoke God. But it is God's manner to show men the plague of their own hearts by some means or other, before he reveals his redeeming love to their souls. While sinners are unconvinced sin lies hid. They take no notice of it. But God makes the law effectual to bring men's own sins of heart and life to be reflected on, and observed. Romans vii. 9. "I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived." Then sin appeared and came to light, which was not before observed. Joseph's revealing himself to his brethren is probably typical of Christ's revealing himself to the soul of a sinner, making known himself in his love, and in his near relation of a brother, and a Redeemer of his soul. But before Joseph revealed himself to them, they were made to reflect upon themselves, and say, "we are verily guilty."

2. God convinces sinners of the dreadful danger they are in by reason of their sin. Having their sins set before them, God makes them sensible of the relation which their sin has to misery. And here are two things of which they are convinced about their danger.

1. God makes them sensible that his displeasure is very dreadful. Before they heard often about the anger of God, and the fierceness of his wrath; but they were not moved by it. But now they are made sensible that it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. They are made in some measure sensible of the dreadfulness of hell. They are led with fixedness and impression to think what a dismal thing it will be to have God an enraged enemy, setting to work the misery of a soul, and how dismal it will be to dwell in such torment for ever without hope. Isaiah xxxiii. 14. "The sinners in Zion are afraid. Fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?" Other sinners are told of hell, but convinced sinners often have hell, as it were, in their view. They being impressed with a sense of the dreadfulness of its misery, is the cause why it works upon their imagination oftentimes; and it will seem as though they saw the dismal flames of hell; as though they saw God in implacable wrath exerting his fury upon them; as though they heard the cries and shrieks of the damned.

2. They are made in some measure sensible of the connex-

ion there is between their sins and that wrath, or how their sin and guilt exposes them to that wrath, of the dreadfulness of which they have such lively apprehensions, and so fear takes hold of them. They are afraid that will be their portion. And they are sensible that they are in a miserable and doleful condition by reason of sin. Many things in the scriptures make it evident that this is God's method. The account we have of our first parents confirms it. They had a sense of guilt and danger, before Christ was revealed to them. They were guilty, and were afraid of God's wrath, and ran and hid themselves. They were terribly afraid when they heard God coming. And doubtless their sense of their guilt and fear, when they were brought before God, and were called to an account, and God asked them what they had done, and whether they had eaten of that tree, whereof he commanded them that they should not eat, prepared them for a discovery of mercy. God made them sensible of their guilt and danger before he revealed to them the covenant of grace. And it is probable that their reflecting upon what God said about the Seed of the woman bruising the serpent's head, soon wrought faith; that it was not long before that discovery God made of a merciful design towards them, was a means of true consolation and hope to them. Joseph's brethren were brought into great distress for fear of their lives before Joseph revealed himself to them. Those who were converted by Peter's sermon, were first pricked in their hearts in a sense of their guilt and their danger. Acts ii. 37. And Paul, before he had his first comfort, trembled, and was astonished. Acts ix. 6. And continued three days and three nights, and neither ate nor drank, which expressed his great distress. The jailer, before he was converted, was in terror. He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. Acts xvi. 29, 30. Christ's invitation is made more especially to the weary and heavy laden; which doubtless has respect, at least partly, to labouring and being weary with a sense of guilt and danger. We read when David was in the cave, then every one who was in distress, was gathered unto him. 1 Samuel xxii. 1. This doubtless was written as typifying Jesus Christ, and the referring of those who were in fear and distress unto him. The expression of flying for refuge, by which coming to Christ is signified, implies, that before they come, they are in fear of some evil. They apprehend themselves in danger, and this fear gives wings to their feet. Proverbs xviii. 10. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower." The voice of God to a sinner, when he gives him true comfort, is a still small voice. But this voice is preceded by a strong wind, and

a terrible earthquake, and fire, as it was in Horeb when Elijah was there. 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. "And behold the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake. And after the earthquake, a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."

Another thing in the scriptures, which seems to evince this, is the frequent comparison made between the church spiritually bringing forth Christ, and a woman in travail, in pain to be delivered. John xvi. 21. and Revelation xii. 2. The conversion of a sinner is represented by the same thing. It is bringing forth Christ in the heart. Paul speaks of man's regeneration as of Christ being brought forth in them. Galatians iv. 19. And therefore Christ calls believers his mother. Matthew xii. 49, 50. "And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of my Father, which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

Hosea v. 15. "I will go and return to my place till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early." (Till they shall be guilty, in the original.)

Doctrine. That it is God's manner to make men sensible of their misery and unworthiness, before he appears in his mercy and love to them.

III. They are made sensible of the desert of their sin; that their sin deserves that wrath of God to which it exposes them. They are not only sensible of the dreadfulness of God's wrath, how fearful a thing it would be to fall into the hands of the living God, and to sustain the eternal expressions of his fierce anger, as well as of the connexion between their sins and this wrath, and how their sins expose them to it; but God is also wont, before he comforts them, to show them that their sins deserve this wrath. By a clear discovery of the connexion between their sin and God's wrath, they are sensible of their danger of hell; of which many are in a measure sensible, who are wholly insensible of their desert of hell. The threatenings of the law make them afraid indeed, that God will punish their sins; yet they have no thorough apprehension of their desert of the punishment threatened; and therefore many, who are afraid, murmur against God. They charge him foolishly with being hard and cruel. But it is God's manner before he speaks peace to

them, and reveals his redeeming love and mercy in Jesus Christ, to make them sensible that they also deserve it. Thus Matthew xviii. 24, 25, 26. "And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down and worshipped him, saying, Lord have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt." Very commonly when men are first made sensible of their danger, their mouths are open against God and his dealings; that is, their hearts are full of murmurings. But it is God's manner before he comforts and reveals his mercy and love to them, to stop their mouths, and make them acknowledge their guilt, or their desert of the threatened punishment. Romans iii. 19, 20. "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore, by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight; for by the law is the knowledge of sin." God would convince men of their guilt before he reveals a pardon to them. Now a man cannot be said to be thoroughly sensible of his guilt, till he is sensible that he deserves hell. A man must be sensible that he is guilty of death, or guilty of damnation, to use the scriptural mode of expression, before God will reveal to him his freedom from damnation. A sense of guilt consists in two things—in a sense of sin, and in a sense of the relation which sin has to punishment. Now the relation which sin has to punishment, is also twofold: first, the connexion which it has with punishment by which it exposes to it, and brings it; and secondly, its desert of punishment. When a man is truly convinced of his desert of the punishment to which his sin exposes him, then he may be said to be thoroughly sensible of his guilt. Then he is become guilty, in the sense of our text, and in the sense of Romans iii. 20.

Inquiry. How is it that a sinner is made sensible of his desert of God's wrath? A natural man may have a sense of this, though not the same sense which a person may have after conversion; because a natural man cannot have a true sight of sin, and of the evil of it. A man cannot truly know the evil of sin against God, except it be by a discovery of his glory and excellence; and then he will be sensible how great an evil it is to sin against him. Yet it cannot be denied that natural men are capable of a conviction of their desert of hell, or that their consciences may be convinced of it without a sight of God's

glory. The consciences of wicked men will also be convinced of the justice of their sentence and of their punishment at the day of judgment; and doubtless will echo to the sentence of the Judge, and condemn them to the same punishment. Here, therefore, we would inquire how it is that a natural man may be made sensible of this. 1. We shall show what is the principle assisted. 2. How it is assisted. And 3. What are the chief external means which are used in order to this.

1. What principle in man is assisted in convincing him of his desert of eternal punishment? No new principle is infused. Natural men have only natural principles; and therefore all that is done by the spirit of God before regeneration is by assisting natural principles. To observe, therefore, in answer to this inquiry,

That the principle, which is assisted in making natural men sensible of their desert of wrath, is natural conscience. Though man has lost a principle of love to God, and all spiritual principles by the fall, yet natural conscience remains. Now there are two things, which are the proper work of natural conscience. One is to give man a sense of right and wrong. A natural man has no sense of the beauty and amiableness of virtue, or of the turpitude and odiousness of vice. But yet every man has that naturally within, which testifies to him that some things are right, and others wrong. Thus if a man steals, or commits murder, there is something within, which tells him that he has done wrong; he knows that he has not done right. Romans ii. 14, 15. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these having not the law, are a law unto themselves; which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing, or else excusing one another." And the other work of natural conscience is to suggest the relation there is between right and wrong, and a retribution. Man has that in him, which suggests to him, when he has done ill, a relation between that ill and punishment. If a man has done that which his conscience tells him is wrong, is unjust, his conscience tells him that he deserves to be punished for it. Thus natural conscience has a twofold power; a teaching, or accusing, and a condemning power. The Spirit of God, therefore, assists natural conscience the more thoroughly to do this, its work, and so convinces a man of sin. Conscience naturally suggests, when he has done a known evil, that he deserves punishment; and being assisted to its work thoroughly, a man is convinced that he deserves eternal punishment. Though natural conscience does remain in man since the fall, yet it greatly

needs assistance in order to its work. It is greatly hindered in doing its work by sin. Every thing in man, which is part of his perfection, is hindered and impaired by sin. A faculty of reason remains since the fall, but it is greatly impaired and blinded. So natural conscience remains, but sin, in a great degree, stupifies it, and hinders it in its work. Now when God convinces a sinner, he assists his conscience against the stupefaction of sin, and helps it to do its work more freely and fully. The spirit of God works immediately upon men's consciences. In conviction their consciences are awakened. They are convinced in their consciences. Their consciences smite them and condemn them.

2. It may be inquired, How God assists natural conscience so as to convince the sinner of his desert of hell? I answer,

1. In general, it is by light. The whole work of God is carried on in the heart of man from his first convictions to his conversion by light. It is by discoveries, which are made to his soul. But by what light is it, that a sinner is made sensible, that he deserves God's wrath? It is some discovery, that he has, which makes him sensible of the heinousness of disobeying and casting contempt upon God. The light, which gives evangelical humiliation, and which makes man sensible of the hateful and odious nature of sin, is a discovery of God's glory and excellence and grace. But what is it, which a natural man sees of God, which makes him sensible that sin against God deserves his wrath; for he sees nothing of the excellence and loveliness of God's glory and grace? I answer,

2. Particularly, it seems to be a discovery of God's awful and terrible greatness. Natural men cannot see any thing of God's loveliness, his amiable and glorious grace, or any thing, which should attract their love; but they may see his terrible greatness to excite their terror. Wicked men in another world, though they do not see his loveliness and grace, yet they see his awful greatness, and that makes them sensible of the heinousness of sin. The damned in hell are sensible of the heinousness of their sin. Their consciences declare it to them. And they are made sensible of it by what they see of the awful greatness of that Being, against whom they have sinned. And wicked men in this world are capable of being made sensible of the heinousness of sin the same way. If a wicked soul is capable while wicked of receiving the discoveries of God's terrible majesty in another world, it is capable of it in this. God may, if he pleases, make wicked men sensible of the same thing here. And in this way natural men may be so made sensible of the heinousness of sin, as to be convinced that they deserve hell; as is evident in that it is by this very means, that wicked men will be made sensible of the justice of their punishment in another world, and at the day of judgment.

For then the wicked will see so much of the awful greatness of God, the Judge, that it will convince their consciences, what a heinous thing it was in them to disobey and contemn such a God, and will convince them that they therefore deserve his wrath. Which shows that wicked men are capable of being convinced in the same way. A wicked man, while a wicked man, is capable of hearing the thunders, and seeing the devouring fire of Mount Sinai; that is, he is capable of being made sensible of that terrible majesty and greatness of God, which was discovered at the giving of the law. But this brings me to the

3. Thing, viz. the principal outward means, which the spirit of God makes use of in this work of convincing men of their desert of hell. And that is the Law. The spirit of God in all his work upon the souls of men works by his word. And in this whole work of conviction of sin, that part of the word is principally made use of; viz. the Law. It is the law, which makes men sensible of their sin; and it is the law attended with its awful threatenings and curses, which gives a sense of the awful greatness, the authority, the power, the jealousy of God. Wicked men are made sensible of the tremendous greatness of God, as it were, in the same manner, in which the children of Israel were; viz. by the thunders, and earthquake, and devouring fire, and sound of the trumpet, and terrible voice at Mount Sinai. All the people, who were in the camp trembled, and they said, Let not God speak with us, lest we die. So that it is the law, which God makes use of in assisting the natural conscience to do its work. Galatians iii. 24. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." It is the law which God makes use of, to make men sensible of their guilt, and to stop their mouths. Romans iii. 19. "Now we know that whatsoever things the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." It is the law, which kills men as to trusting in their own righteousness. "For I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Galatians ii. 19. "For I through the law, am dead to the law." Conviction, which precedes conversion, is of sin and misery. But men are not thoroughly sensible of their sin or guilt, till they are sensible they deserve hell; nor thoroughly sensible of their misery, till they are sensible they are helpless.

4. It is God's manner to make men sensible of their helplessness in their own strength. It is usual with sinners when they are first made sensible of their danger of hell, to attempt by their own strength, to save themselves. They in some measure see their danger, and endeavour to work out their own deliverance. They are striving to make themselves better. They strive to convert themselves, to work their hearts into a believing frame, and to ex-

ercise a saving trust in Christ. Having heard that if ever they believe, they must put their trust in Christ, and in him alone, for salvation, they think they will trust in Christ and cast their souls upon him. And this they endeavour to do in their own strength. This is very common with persons upon a sick bed, when they are afraid that they shall die and go to hell, and are told that they must put their trust in Christ alone for salvation. They attempt to do it in their own strength. So sinners will be striving without a sense of their insufficiency in themselves to bring their own hearts to love God, and to choose him for their portion, and to repent of their sins. Or they strive to make themselves better, that so God may be more willing to convert them and give them his grace, and enable them to believe in Christ, and love God, and repent of their sins. But before God appears to them as their help and deliverance, it is his manner to make them sensible, that they are utterly helpless in themselves. They are brought to despair of help from themselves. There is a death to all their hopes from themselves. Romans vii. 9. Before God opens the prison doors, he makes them see that they are shut up, that they are close prisoners, and that there is no way, in which they can escape. Christ tells us in Isaiah lxi. 1, that he was sent to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim liberty to captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. Christ was sent to open the prison to them that are not only really, but sensibly bound. Galatians iii. 23. "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith, that should afterwards be revealed." God makes men sensible that they are in a forlorn condition; that they are wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked, before he comforts them. Christ tells us in John ix. 39. "For judgment I am come into the world, that they, which see not, might see; and that they, which see, might be made blind;" meaning partly at least, by those that see, those who think they see; having respect to the Pharisees, who were proud of their knowledge; and by the blind, those, who are sensibly blind. This is emblematically represented by Saul's blindness before his first comfort. He was blind till Ananias came to him to open his eyes; probably designed to intimate to us that before God opens the eyes of men in conversion, he makes them sensibly blind. God brings men to this despair in their own strength in these ways.

1. God oftentimes makes use of men's own experience to convince them that they are helpless in themselves. When they first set out in seeking salvation, it may be they thought it an easy thing to be converted. They thought they should presently bring themselves to repent of their sins, and believe in Christ, and accordingly they strove in their own strength with hopes of success. But they were disappointed. And so God suffers them to go on striving to

open their own eyes, and mend their own hearts. But they find no success. They have been striving to see for a long time, yet they are as blind as ever; and can see nothing. It is all Egyptian darkness. They have been striving to make themselves better. But they are as bad as ever. They have often striven to do something which is good, to be in the exercise of good affections, which should be acceptable to God, but they have no success. And it seems to them, that instead of growing better, they grow worse and worse; their hearts are fuller of wicked thoughts than they were at first; they see no more likelihood of their conversion than there was at first. So God suffers them to strive in their own strength, till they are discouraged, and despair of helping themselves. The prodigal son first strove to fill his belly with the husks which the swine did eat. But when he despaired of being helped in that way, then he came to himself, and entertained thoughts of returning to his father's house.

2. God sometimes, by a particular assistance of the understanding, enables men to see so much of their own hearts, as at once causes them to despair of helping themselves. He sometimes convinces them by their own trials, suffering them to try a long time to effect their own salvation, until they are discouraged. But God, if he pleases, can convince men without such endeavours of their own; and sometimes he does so; as must be the case in many sudden conversions, of which the instances are not unfrequent. By revealing to them their own hearts, he sometimes enables them to perceive that they are so remote from the exercise of love to God, of faith, and of every other Christian grace, as well as from the possession of the least degree of spiritual light, that they despair of ever bringing themselves to it. They perceive that within their souls all is darkness as darkness itself, and as the shadow of death, and that it is too much for them to cause light. They find themselves dead to any thing good, and therefore despair of bringing themselves to the performance of gracious acts. Thus we have shown that it is God's ordinary manner, before he reveals his redeeming mercy to the souls of men, to make them sensible of their sinfulness and danger, of their desert of the divine wrath, and of their utter helplessness in themselves. This we have shown to be most accordant with the holy scriptures, as well as with God's method of dealing with mankind in other things. And we have shown in an imperfect manner how, and by what means it is, that God thus convinces men. This work is what Christ speaks of, as one part of the work of the Holy Ghost. John xvi. 8. "When he is come, he will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." It is God's manner to convince men of sin, before he convinces them of righteousness.

I come now to show the reasons of the doctrine.

The propriety of such a method of proceeding is very obvious. How agreeable to the divine wisdom does it seem, that the sinner should be brought to such a conviction of his danger and misery, as to perceive his utter incapacity to help himself by any strength or contrivance of his own, and his entire unworthiness of God's help, and desert of his wrath; and that he should be brought to acknowledge that God, in the exercise of his holy sovereignty, may with perfect justice do with him as before he appears in his pardoning mercy and love, as his helper and friend. A man who is converted is successively in two exceedingly different states; first, a very miserable, wretched state, a state of condemnation; and then in a blessed condition, a state of justification. How agreeable, therefore, does it seem to the divine wisdom, that such a man should be conscious of this: first, of his miserable, condemned state, and then of his happy state; that, as he is really first guilty, and under a deep desert of hell, before he is really pardoned and admitted to God's favour, so he should first be conscious that he is guilty, and under such a desert of hell before he is conscious of being the object of pardoning and redeeming mercy and grace. But the propriety of God's thus dealing with the souls of men, will appear perhaps better by considering the following reasons:

1. It is the will of God, that the discoveries of his terrible majesty, and awful holiness and justice, should accompany the discoveries of his grace and love, in order that he may give to his creatures worthy and just apprehensions of himself. It is the glory of God, that these attributes are united in the divine nature, that as he is a being of infinite mercy and love and grace, so he is a being of infinite and tremendous majesty, and awful holiness and justice. The perfect and harmonious union of these attributes, in the divine nature is what constitutes the chief part of their glory. God's awful and terrible attributes, and his mild and gentle attributes, reflect glory one on the other; and the exercise of the one is in the perfect consistency and harmony with that of the other. If there were the exercise of the mild and gentle attributes without the other, if there were love and mercy and grace in inconsistency with God's authority and justice and infinite hatred of sin, it would be no glory. If God's love and grace did not harmonize with his justice and the honour of his majesty, far from being an honour, they would be a dishonour to God. Therefore as God designs to glorify himself when he makes discoveries of the one, he will also make discoveries of the other. When he makes discoveries of his love and grace, it shall appear that they harmonize with those other attributes; otherwise his true glory would not be discovered. If men were sensible of the love of God

without a sense of those other attributes, they would be exposed to have improper and unworthy apprehensions of God, as though he were gracious to sinners in such a manner as did not become a Being of infinite majesty and infinite hatred of sin. And as it would expose to unworthy apprehensions of God, so it would expose the soul in some respects to behave unsuitably towards God. There would not be a due reverence blended with love and joy. Such discoveries of love, without answerable discoveries of awful greatness, would dispose the soul to come with an undue boldness to God. The very nature and design of the gospel show that this is the will of God, that those who have the discoveries of his love, should also have the discoveries of those other attributes. For this was the very end of Christ's laying down his life, and coming into the world, to render the glory of God's authority, holiness, and justice consistent with his grace in pardoning and justifying sinners, that while God thus manifested his mercy, we might not conceive any unworthy thoughts of him with respect to those other attributes. Seeing, therefore, that this is the very end of Christ's coming into the world, we may conclude that those who are actually redeemed by Christ, and have a true discovery of Christ made to their souls, have a discovery of God's terribleness and justice to prepare them for the discovery of his love and mercy. God, of old, before the death and sufferings of Christ were so fully revealed, was ever careful that the discoveries of both should be together, so that men might not apprehend God's mercy in pardoning sin and receiving sinners, to the disparagement of his justice. When God proclaimed his name to Moses, in answer to his desire that he might see God's glory, he indeed proclaimed his mercy: "The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth; keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin." But he did not stop here, but also proclaimed his holy justice and vengeance; "and that will by no means clear the guilty; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and fourth generation." Thus they are joined together again in the fourth commandment. "For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me." Thus we find them joined together in passages too numerous to be mentioned. When God was about to speak to Elijah in Horeb, he was first prepared for such a familiar conversing with God by awful manifestations of the divine majesty. First there was a wind, which rent the rocks, and then an earthquake, and then a devouring fire. 1 Kings xix. 11, 12. God is careful even in heaven, where the discoveries of his love and grace are given in such an exalted degree, also to provide

means for a proportional sense of his terribleness, and the dreadfulness of his displeasure, by their beholding it in the miseries and torments of the damned, at the same time that they enjoy his love. Even the man Christ Jesus was first made sensible of the wrath of God, before his exaltation to that transcendant height of enjoyment of the Father's love. And this is one reason that God gives sinners a sense of his wrath against their sins, and of his justice, before he gives them the discoveries of his redeeming love.

2. Unless a man be thus convinced of his sin and misery before God makes him sensible of his redeeming love and mercy, he cannot be sensible of that love and mercy as it is; viz. that it is free and sovereign. When God reveals his redeeming grace to men, and makes them truly sensible of it, he would make them sensible of it as it is. God's grace and love towards sinners is in itself very wonderful, as it redeems from dreadful wrath. But men cannot be sensible of this until they perceive in some adequate degree how dreadful the wrath of God is. God's redeeming grace and love in Christ is free and sovereign, as it is altogether without any worthiness in those who are the objects of it. But men cannot be sensible of this, until they are sensible of their own unworthiness. The grace of God in Christ is glorious and wonderful, as it is not only as the objects of it are without worthiness, but as they deserve the everlasting wrath and displeasure of God. But they cannot be sensible of this until they are made sensible that they deserve God's eternal wrath. The grace of God in Christ is wonderful, as it saves and redeems from so many and so great sins, and from the punishment they have deserved. But sinners cannot be sensible of this till they are in some measure sensible of their sinfulness, and brought to reflect upon the sins of their lives, and to see the wickedness of their hearts. It is the glory of God's grace in Christ, that it is so free and sovereign. And doubtless it is the will of God, that when he reveals his grace to the soul, it should be seen in its proper glory, though not perfectly. When men see the glory of God's grace aright, they see it as free and unmerited, and contrary to the demerit of their sins. All who have a spiritual understanding of the grace of God in Christ, have a perception of the glory of that grace. But the glory of the divine grace appears chiefly in its being bestowed on the sinner when he is in a condition so exceedingly miserable and necessitous. In order, therefore, that the sinner may be sensible of this glory, he must first be sensible of the greatness of his misery, and then of the greatness of the divine mercy. The heart of man is not prepared to receive the mercy of God in Christ, as free and unmerited, till he is sensible of his own demerit. Indeed the soul is not capable of receiving a revelation or discovery of the redeeming grace of God in Christ, as redeeming grace, without be-

ing convinced of sin and misery. He must see his sin and misery before he can see the grace of God in redeeming him from that sin and misery.

3. Until the sinner is convinced of his sin and misery, he is not prepared to receive the redeeming mercy and grace of God, as through a Mediator; because he does not see his need of a Mediator till he sees his sin and misery. If there were, on the part of God, any exercise of absolute and immediate mercy toward sinners bestowed without any satisfaction or purchase, the soul might possibly see that without a conviction of its sin and misery. But there is not. All God's mercy to sinners is through a Saviour. The redeeming mercy and grace of God is mercy and grace in Christ. And when God discovers his mercy to the soul, he will discover it as mercy in a Saviour; and it is his will that the mercy should be received as in and through a Saviour, with a full consciousness of its being through his righteousness and satisfaction. It is the will of God, that as all the spiritual comforts which his people receive are in and through Christ, so they should be sensible that they receive them through Christ, and that they can receive them in no other way. It is the will of God, that his people should have their eyes directed to Christ, and should depend upon him for mercy and favour, that whenever they receive comforts through his purchase, they should receive them as from him. And that because God would glorify his Son as Mediator, as the glory of man's salvation belongs to Christ, so it is the will of God that all the people of Christ, all who are saved by him, should receive their salvation as of him, and should attribute the glory of it to him; and that none who will not give the glory of salvation to Christ, should have the benefit of it. Upon this account God insists upon it, and it is absolutely necessary that a sinner's conviction of his sin, and misery, and helplessness in himself, should precede or accompany the revelation of the redeeming love and grace of God. I shall also mention two other ends which are hereby attained.

4. By this means the redeeming mercy and love of God are more highly prized and rejoiced in, when discovered. By the previous discoveries of danger, misery, and helplessness, and desert of wrath, the heart is prepared to embrace a discovery of mercy. When the soul stands trembling at the brink of the pit, and despairs of any help from itself, it is prepared joyfully to receive tidings of deliverance. If God is pleased at such at a time to make the soul hear his still small voice, his call to himself and to a Saviour, the soul is prepared to give it a joyful reception. The gospel then, if it be heard spiritually, will be glad tidings indeed; the most joyful, which the sinner ever heard. The love of God and of Christ to the world, and to him in particular, will be

admired, and Christ will be most precious. To remember what danger he was in, what seas surrounded him; and then to reflect how safe he now is in Christ, and how sufficient Christ is to defend him, and to answer all his wants, will cause the greater exultation of soul. God, in this method of dealing with the souls of his elect, consults their happiness, as well as his own glory. And it increases happiness, to be made sensible of their misery and unworthiness, before God comforts them; for their comfort, when they receive it, is so much the sweeter.

5. The heart is more prepared and disposed to praise God for it. This follows from the reasons already mentioned; as they are hereby made sensible how free and sovereign the mercy of God is towards them, and how great his grace in saving them; and as they more highly prize the mercy and love of God made known to them: All will dispose them to magnify the name of God, to exalt the love of God the Father in giving his Son to them, and to exalt Jesus Christ by their praise, who laid down his life for them to redeem them from all iniquity. They are ready to say, How miserable should I have been, had not God had pity upon me, and provided me a Saviour! In what a miserable condition should I have been, had not Christ loved me, and given himself for me! I must have endured that dreadful wrath of God; I must have suffered the punishment, which I had deserved by all that great sin and wickedness, of which I have been guilty.

APPLICATION.

I. This subject admits of an application to unconverted sinners. If it be so, as has been represented, then let me exhort you to seek those convictions. Though you are at present sinners, and have no terrifying sense of your danger of hell, yet I presume to say concerning most of you at least, that you do not intend to go to hell. When you happen to think about another world, you flatter yourself, that in some way or other, you shall escape eternal misery; or at least, you do not think of it with a willingness to be damned. But if it be, that you do not suffer eternal damnation, you have a great work to do before you die. It ordinarily is a very difficult work, especially to those, who have gone on for a considerable time in ways of wickedness under the means of grace. If you are ever truly converted, you must be convinced of your misery and unworthiness; you must be guilty in your own sense. Begin your work, then, and seek to be made sensible of your misery and unworthiness. Make haste, and set about this work speedily. You may defer it so long, that it will be too late. It may be too late, if you delay, in these two ways. It may be too late, as you may be overtaken with death, before you

set about it, as thousands and millions have been before you. And if you should not die before you begin, yet it may be too late, as you may never have an opportunity to get through. Some persons are a long time under convictions, before they are converted. There are some, whom God suffers to continue a long time seeking salvation in their own strength before he makes them despair of help from themselves. They continue many years trusting in their own righteousness, as it were, wandering from mountain to hill, from one hold to another seeking rest and safety. They are a long time building castles in the air. They sometimes flatter themselves from one consideration, and sometimes from another. And if you should delay, there is danger that you may not have time. Some are many years under fears of damnation, and are seeking salvation. And there are many for whom death is too quick. Here we will consider briefly what are the occasions of the stupidity and senselessness of sinners; and thence shall take occasion to warn those, who would seek the convictions of God's spirit.

1. Some provoke God to withhold the strivings, and convincing influences of his spirit. Some provoke God to give them up to hardness of heart. God lets them alone, and intends to let them alone. Hosea iv. 16. "Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." Psalms lxxxi. 11, 12. "But my people would not hearken to my voice; and Israel would none of me. So I gave them up to their own heart's lust; and they walked in their own counsels."

Hosea v. 15.—I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.

Doctrine. It is God's manner to make men sensible of their misery and unworthiness, before he appears in his mercy and love to them; particularly before he appears in his redeeming love and mercy to their souls.

Second use. To exhort those, who have some convictions of sin and danger, that they do not lose them. If you have the strivings of God's spirit, God has met with you, led you to reflect upon your sins, and sensible that you are in danger of hell; and so made you concerned about your soul, and put you upon seeking salvation. Take heed that you do not lose your convictions, and grow senseless of eternal things, and negligent of your soul's concern, that you do not return to your former careless way of living, that you do not return to your former sins. Here consider,

1. That there is danger of it. It is not all, who are under concern for their souls, and who, by the strivings of God's spirit, are

put upon seeking and striving for salvation, who hold out. There are many more, who set out at the beginning of the race, who do not hold out to the end. Many things intervene between the beginning and the end of the race, which divert, and stop, and turn back many who commenced well. There are many, who seem to be under strong convictions, and to be very earnest in seeking, whose convictions are but short-lived. And some, who seem to be much concerned about salvation for a considerable time, it may be for years together, yet by degrees grow careless and negligent. There is much in your own heart, which tends to stupify you. It is the natural tendency of sin and lust, to stupify the conscience. And as corruption is reigning as yet in your heart, it will ever be ready to exert itself in such acts, as will have a great tendency to drive away your convictions. And Satan is doubtless diligently watching over you, striving in all ways to abate, and to take off your convictions. He joins in with the sloth and lusts of your heart to persuade to negligence, and to turn your mind to other things. And the world is full of objects, which tend to take off your mind from the soul's concern, and are constantly, as it were, endeavouring to take possession of your mind, and to drive out the concerns of another world.

2. Consider if you lose your convictions, it will be no advantage to you, that ever you had them, as to any furtherance of your salvation. Whatever terrors you have been under about damnation, to whatever reflections you have been brought upon your sins, whatever strong desires you have had after deliverance, and whatever earnest prayers you have made, it will all be lost. What you have suffered of fear and concern will turn to no good account; and what you have done, the pains you have taken, will be utterly lost. When you have strove against sin, and laboured in duty, have stemmed the stream, and have proceeded a considerable way up the hill, and made some progress towards the kingdom of heaven, when once you have lost your convictions, you will be as far from salvation, as you were before you began; you will lose all the ground you have gained; you will go quite down to the bottom of the hill; the stream will immediately carry you back. All will be lost; you had as good never have had those convictions, as to have had them, and then to lose them.

3. You do not know, that you shall ever have such an opportunity again. God is now striving with you by his spirit. If you should lose the strivings of his spirit, it may be that God's spirit would never return again. If you are under convictions, you have a precious opportunity, which, if you knew the worth of it, you would esteem as better than any temporal advantages. You have a price in your hands to get wisdom, which is more valuable than gold or silver. It is a great privilege to live under means of

grace, to enjoy the word and ordinances of God, and to know the way of salvation. It is a greater thing still to live under a powerful dispensation of the means of grace under a very instructive, convincing ministry. But it is a much greater privilege still to be the subject of the convincing influences of the spirit of God. If you have these, you have a precious advantage in your hands. And if you lose it, it is questionable whether you ever have the like advantage again. We are counselled to seek the Lord while he may be found, and to call upon him while he is near. Isaiah v. 6. A time in which God's spirit is striving with a man by convictions of his sin and danger, is especially such a time, that is a sinner's best opportunity. It is especially a day of salvation. God may be said to be near, when he pours out his spirit upon many in the place where a person dwells. It is prudence for all then to be calling upon God as being near at such a time. But especially is God near, at a time when he is pouring out his spirit in immediately convincing and awakening a man's own soul. If therefore God's spirit is now at work with you, you have a precious opportunity. Take heed that you do not by any means let it slip. It may doubtless be said concerning many, that they have missed their opportunity. Most men, who live under the gospel, have a special opportunity, that there is a certain season, which God appoints for them, which is, above all others, a day of grace with them, when men have a very fair opportunity for securing eternal salvation, if they did but know it, and had hearts for it. But the misery of man is great upon him; for man knoweth not his time. The wise man tells us, Ecclesiastes viii. 6, 7, that "To every purpose there is time and judgment, therefore the misery of man is great upon him. For he knoweth not that which shall be." And again, ix. 12, "Man knoweth not his time." If the spirit of God is now striving with you, it may be it is your time; and it may be your only time. Be wise, therefore, and understand the things, which belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes. You have not the influences of the spirit of God in your own power. You cannot have convictions and awakenings when you please. God is sovereign as to the bestowment of them. If you are ready to flatter yourself, that although you neglect now, when you are young, yet you shall be awakened again; that is a vain and groundless presumption. It is a difficult thing for a man, who has been going on in a sinful course, to reform. There are a great many difficulties in the way of thorough reformation. If you therefore have reformed, and returned again to your former sin, you will have all those difficulties to overcome again.

4. If you lose your convictions, and return again to a way of allowed sinning, there will be less probability of your salvation, than there was before you had any convictions. Backsliding is a

very dangerous and pernicious thing to men's souls, and is often spoken of as such in God's word; which was signified in that awful dispensation of God in turning Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, to be a standing emblem of the danger of looking back after one has set out in a way of religion. The ill to which they are subject, who lose their convictions, is not merely the loss of their convictions. Their convictions are not only a means of no good to them, but they turn to much ill. It would have been better for them, that they had never had them. For they are now set more remote from salvation than they were before. For having risen some considerable way towards heaven, and falling back, they sink lower, and farther down towards hell, than ever they were. The way to heaven is now blocked up with greater difficulties than ever it was. Their hearts now are become harder for light, and convictions being once conquered, they evermore are an occasion of a greater hardness of heart than there was before. Yea, there is no one thing whatsoever, which has so great a tendency to it. Man's heart is hardened by losing convictions, as iron is hardened by being heated and cooled. If you are awakened, and afterwards lose your convictions, it will be a harder thing to awaken you again. If there were only that you are growing older, there would be less probability of your being awakened again; for as person's grow older they grow less and less susceptible of convictions; evil habits grow stronger and more deeply rooted in the heart. You greatly offend God by quenching his spirit, and returning as a dog to his vomit, and as a sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire. And there is danger that God will say concerning you, as he did concerning Jerusalem, Ezekiel xxiv. 13, "Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee." If you return again to your wicked course, if you should go to hell at last, you will lament that ever you have had any convictions: you will find your punishment so much the heavier. And if you should be hereafter awakened, and set about striving for salvation, yet you will probably find harder work in it; you do but make work for yourself by your backsliding. You will not only have all to do over again which you have done, and which you must have done, if you had gone on, but there will be new work for repentance. There probably must be greater and more dreadful terrors; and it may be a much longer time spent in seeking and striving, a more difficult work with your own headstrong corruptions. If you were but sensible of one half of the disadvantages of backsliding, and the many woes and calamities in which it will involve you, you would be careful not to lose your convictions.

5. Consider the encouragement there is in scripture to persevere in seeking salvation, as in Hosea vi. 3. "Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord." Thence we may gather, that God usually gives success to those who diligently, and constantly, and perseveringly seek conversion. And that you be the better directed in taking care not to lose your convictions, it is convenient that you should be aware of those things which are common occasions of persons losing their convictions. I shall therefore briefly mention some of them.

1. Persons falling into sin is very often the occasion of their losing their convictions. Some temptation prevails, so that they are drawn into some sin. Some lust upon some occasion has been stirred up, and they have been overcome by their sinful appetites, and have provoked God to anger. It may be they have been drawn into some criminal act of sensuality, and so have quenched the spirit. Or they have got into some quarrel with some persons. Their spirits are disturbed, and heated with malice and revenge, and they have acted sinfully, or have sinfully expressed themselves, and have driven away the spirit of God. These are the most ready ways to put an end to convictions.

2. Sometimes there happens some diverting occasion; there is some incident which for the present diverts their minds. Their minds are taken off from their business for a short time. They are drawn into company. It may be they see something which revives a desire of worldly enjoyments and entertainments; or they are engaged in some exercise and business, which diverts their minds. And so afterwards they are more careless than they were before. They are not so strict in attending private duties; and carelessness and stupidity by degrees steal upon them, till they wholly lose their convictions.

3. Some change in their circumstances takes off their minds from the concerns of their souls. Their minds are diverted by the new circumstances with which they are attended; or are taken up with new pleasures and enjoyments, or with new cares and business, in which they are involved. It may be they grow richer. They prosper in the world, and their worldly good things crowd in, and take possession of their minds. Or worldly cares are increased upon them, and they have so many things to look after, that their minds are taken up, and they have not time to look after their souls.

SERMON III.

SEPTEMBER, 1737.

Hosea ii. 15.

And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.

In the context, the church of Israel is first threatened with the awful desolation which God was about to bring upon her for her dealing so falsely and treacherously with God; because though, in the bold language of the prophet, she had been married to God, she had yet gone after other lovers, and had committed adultery with them. "For she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread, and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." Therefore God threatened that he would strip her naked, and set her as in the day that she was born, and make her as a wilderness, and set her like a dry land, and slay her with thirst, and that he would discover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, and destroy her vines and fig-trees, and make them a forest. So the prophet goes on terribly threatening her to the end of the thirteenth verse. And those things were fulfilled in the captivity of Israel in the land of Assyria. But in the verse preceding the text, and in the remainder of the chapter, there follows a gracious promise of mercy, which God would show her in the days of the gospel. "Therefore, behold I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope; and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt." "I will allure her," that is, I will court or woo her again, as a young man woos a virgin, whom he desires to make his wife. God, for her committing adultery with other lovers, had threatened that he would give her a bill of divorce, as verse second. "Plead with your mother, plead; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband." But here in the latter part of the chapter, God promises that in gospel times he would make her his wife again, as in the sixteenth verse. "And it shall be at that day that

thou shalt call me Ishi;" that is, "my husband." And so in verses 19, 20. "And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me for ever in righteousness, and in judgment, in loving kindness, and in mercies; I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness." Here in the fourteenth verse, God promises that he will woo her, and in the latter part of the verse, he shows in what manner he will deal with her when he is about to woo or allure her. He would first bring her into the wilderness; that is, he would bring her into trouble and distress, and so humble her, and then allure her by speaking comfortably or pleasantly to her, as a young man does to a maid whom he woos. Then follow the words of the text.

1. We may observe what God would give to the children of Israel; viz. hope and comfort. He promises to give her vineyards; which being spiritually interpreted as most of the prophecies of gospel times are to be interpreted, signifies spiritual comforts. Vineyards afford wine, which is comfort to those who are of heavy hearts. Proverbs xxxi. 6. "Give wine to those that are of heavy hearts. Wine is to make glad the heart of man." Psalms civ. 15. Gospel rest and peace are sometimes prophesied of, under the metaphor of every man's sitting under his vine and under his own fig-tree. God promises to give her hope, to open a door of hope for her, and to give her songs; that is, to give her spiritual joy, and both cause and disposition joyfully to sing praises to God.

2. We may observe after what manner God would bestow those benefits. 1. They should be given after great trouble and abasement. Before she had this hope and comfort given, she should be brought into great trouble and distress to humble her. He promises to give her her vineyards from thence; that is, from the wilderness spoken of in the foregoing verse, into which it is said that God would bring her, before he spoke comfortably to her. God would bring her into the wilderness, and then give her vineyards. God's bringing her into the wilderness was to humble her, and fit her to receive vineyards, and to make her see her dependence on God for them, that she might not attribute her enjoyment of them to her idols, as she had done before, for which reason God took them away, as in the twelfth verse. "And I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, these are my rewards that my lovers have given me; and I will make them a forest." There it is threatened that God will turn her vineyards into a forest, or wilderness. Here it is promised that he would turn the wilderness into vineyards, as Isaiah xxxii. 15. "Until the Spirit be poured on us from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." She should first be in a wilderness, where she shall see that she cannot help

herself, nor any of her idols help, or give her any vineyards. And then God will help her, that she shall see that it is God, and not any of her idols or lovers. God would first bring her into a wilderness, and thence give her vineyards, as God first brought the children of Israel into a dreadful wilderness. So God opened a door of hope to them in the valley of Achor, which is a word that signifies trouble, and was so called from the trouble which the children of Israel suffered by the sin of Achor. So God is wont first to make their sin a great trouble to them, an occasion of a great deal of distress, before he opens a door of hope. God promises to make her sing there as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. This plainly refers to the joyful song which Moses and the children of Israel sang when they came up out of the Red Sea. The children of Israel there had great joy and comfort; but just before they had great trouble. They had been in extreme distress by the oppression of their task-masters; and just before this triumphant song, they were brought to extremity and almost to despair, when Pharaoh and the Egyptians appeared ready to swallow them up.

2. This hope and comfort should be bestowed on the slaying and forsaking of sin. That is the troubler of the soul. It should be given in the valley of Achor, which was the valley where the troubler of Israel was slain, as you may see in Joshua vii. 26; and the place where the children of Israel sang, when they came up out of the land of Egypt. The eastern shore of the Red Sea was the place where they saw their enemies and old task-masters, the types of men's lusts, which are sinners' taskmasters, lie dead on the sea shore, and of whom they took their final leave. And God had told them, that their enemies whom they had seen that day, they should see no more for ever.

Doctrine. God is wont to cause hope and comfort to arise in the soul after trouble and humbling for sin, and according as the troubler is slain and forsaken. I would show,

I. That it is thus with respect to the first true hope and comfort which is given to the soul at conversion.

II. That God is wont to bestow hope and comfort on Christians from time to time in this way.

I. God is wont to cause hope and comfort to arise to the soul in conversion after trouble and humbling for sin, and upon the slaying of the troubler.

1. It is God's manner to bestow hope and comfort on a soul in conversion after trouble and humbling for sin. Under this head are three things to be observed. 1. The trouble itself. 2. The cause, viz. sin. 3. The humbling.

1. Souls are wont to be brought into trouble before God bestows true hope and comfort. The corrupt hearts of men naturally incline

to stupidity and senselessness before God comes with the awakening influences of his spirit. They are quiet and secure; they have no true comfort and hope, and yet they are quiet; they are at ease. They are in miserable slavery, and yet seek not a remedy. They say, as the children of Israel did in Egypt to Moses, "let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians." But if God has a design of mercy to them, it is his manner before he bestows true hope and comfort on them, to bring them into trouble, to distress them, and spoil their ease and false quietness, and to rouse them out of their old resting and sleeping places, and to bring them into a wilderness. They are brought into trouble, and sometimes into exceedingly great trouble and distress, so that they can take no comfort in those things in which they used to take comfort. Their hearts are pinched and stung, and they can find no ease in any thing. They have, as it were, an arrow sticking fast in them, which causes grievous and continual pain, an arrow which they cannot shake off, or pull out. The pain and anguish of it drinks up their spirit. Their worldly enjoyments were a sufficient good before; but they are not now. They wander about with wounded hearts, seeking rest, and finding none; like one wandering in a dry and parched wilderness under the burning, scorching heat of the sun, seeking for some shadow where he may sit down and rest, but finding none. Wherever he goes the beams of the sun scorch him: or he seeks some fountain of cool water to quench his thirst, but finds not a drop. He is like David in his trouble, who wandered about in the wilderness, Saul pursuing him wherever he went, driving and hunting him from one wilderness to another, from one mountain to another, and from one cave to another, giving him no rest. To such sinners, all things look dark, and they know not what to do, nor whither to turn. If they look forward or backward, to the right hand or the left, all is gloom and perplexity. If they look to heaven, behold darkness; if they look to the earth, behold trouble, and darkness, and dimness of anguish. Sometimes they hope for relief, but they are disappointed, and so again and again they travail in pain, and a dreadful sound is in their ears. They are terrified and affrighted, and they seek refuge, as a poor creature pursued by an enemy. He flies to one refuge, and there is beset, and that fails; then he flies to another, and then is driven out of that. And his enemies grow thicker and thicker about, encompassing him on every side. They are like those of whom we read in Isaiah xxiv. 17, 18. Fear, and the pit and the snare are upon them, and when they flee from the noise of the fear they are taken in the pit; and if they come up out of the pit, they are taken in the snare. So that they know not what to do. They are like the children of Israel, while Achor troubled them. They go forth against their enemies, and they are smitten down and flee before them. They call on God, but

he does not answer, nor seem to regard them. Sometimes they find something in which they take pleasure for a little time, but it soon vanishes away, and leaves them in greater distress than before. And sometimes they are brought to the very borders of despair. Thus they are brought into the wilderness, and into the valley of Achor, or of trouble.

2. Sin is the trouble or the cause of this trouble. Sin is the disease of the soul, and such a disease as will, if the soul is not benumbed, cause exceeding pain. Sin brings guilt, and that brings condemnation and wrath. All this trouble arises from conviction of sin. Awakened sinners are convinced that they are sinful. Before the sinner thought well of himself, or was not convinced that he was very sinful. But now he is led to reflect first on what he has done, how wickedly he has spent his time, what wicked acts or practices he has been guilty of. And afterwards in the progress of his awakenings he is made sensible of something of the sin and plague of his heart. They are made sensible of the guilt and wrath which sin brings. The threatenings of God's law are set home, and they are made sensible that God is angry, and that his wrath is dreadful. They are led to consider of the dreadfulness of that punishment, which God has threatened. The affection or principle, which is wrought upon to cause this trouble, is fear. They are afraid of the punishment of sin, and God's wrath for it. They are commonly afraid of many things here in this world as the fruit of sin. They are afraid that God will not hear their prayers, that he is so angry with them, that he will never give them converting grace. They are afraid oftentimes that they have committed the unpardonable sin, or at least that they have been guilty of such sin as God will never pardon ; that their day is past, and that God has given them up to judicial hardness of heart and blindness of mind. Or if they are not already, they are afraid they shall be. They are afraid oftentimes, that the spirit of God is not striving with them now, that their fears are from some other cause. Sometimes they are afraid that it is only the devil, who terrifies and afflicts them ; and that if the spirit of God is striving with them, he will be taken from them, and they shall be left in a Christless state. They are afraid that if they seek salvation, it will be to no purpose, and that they shall only make their case worse and worse ; that they are farther and farther from any thing which is good, and that there is less probability now of their being converted, than when they began to seek. Sometimes they fear, that they have but a short time to live, and that God will soon cast them to hell ; that none ever were as they are, who ever found mercy ; that their case is peculiar, and that all wherein they differ from others is for the worse. They have fears on every side. Oftentimes they are

afraid of every thing. Every thing looks dark, and they are afraid that every thing will prove ruinous to them. But in the issue of all they are afraid, they shall perish for ever. They are afraid that when they die, they shall go down to hell, and there have their portion appointed them in everlasting burnings. This is the sum of all their fears. And the cause of this fear is a consciousness of the guilt of sin. It is sin, which is the cruel task-master, which oppresses them, and chastises them; and sin is the cruel Pharaoh, which pursues them. As the children of Israel, before they came to sing with joy, after they came up out of the land of Egypt, were under great trouble from their task-masters, and sighed by reason of the hard bondage, and then were pursued, and put into dreadful fear at the Red Sea. It was their task-masters who made them all this trouble. So it is sin which makes all the trouble, which a sinner suffers under awakenings. Their trouble for sin is no gracious, godly sorrow for sin; for that does not arise merely from fear, but from love. It is not an evangelical, but legal repentance of which we are speaking, which is not from love to God, but only self-love.

3. The end of this trouble in those to whom God designs mercy is to humble them. God leads them into the wilderness before he speaks comfortably to them, for the same cause that he led the children of Israel into the wilderness before he brought them into Canaan, which we are told was to humble them. Deuteronomy viii. 2. "And thou shalt remember all the way, which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee and to prove thee, and to know what was in thine heart." Man naturally trusts in himself, and magnifies himself. And for man to enjoy only ease and prosperity and quietness tends to nourish and establish such a disposition. Deuteronomy xxxii. 15. "Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked." But by trouble and distress, and by a sense of a heavy load of guilt, God brings men down into the dust. God brings souls thus into the wilderness to show them their own helplessness, to let them see that they have nothing to which they can turn for help, to make them sensible that they are not rich and increased with goods, but wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked; to show them that they are utterly undone and ruined, to make them sensible of their exceeding wickedness, and to bring them to be sensible how justly God might cast them off for ever. Those legal troubles tend to show them their utter inability to help themselves, as their fears put them on using their utmost endeavours, and trying their utmost strength; and by continuing in that way their experience teaches them their weakness, and they find they can do nothing. It puts them upon repeated trials, and they have as repeated disappointments. But repeated disappointments tend to bring a man to give up the case, and to despair of help in that way in which he has tried for it. It

tends to make men sensible of the utter insufficiency of their wisdom, and bring them to see their own exceeding blindness and ignorance. For fear and concern and distress necessarily put a person on intensely thinking and studying and contriving for relief. But when men have been thus trying their own wisdom and invention to their utmost, and find it fails, and signifies nothing, and is altogether to no purpose, it makes them more and more sensible of their weakness and blindness, and brings them to confess themselves fools, and blind as to those things which concern their relief. They are like one who is placed in the midst of a vast hideous wilderness. At first it may be he may not be sensible but that he knows the way home, and can directly go in the way which leads out of the wilderness. But after he has tried and has travelled awhile, and finds that he cannot find the way, and that he spends himself in vain, and only goes round and round and comes to the same place again at last, he is brought to confess that he knows not where to go, nor what to do, and that he is sensible that he is like one who is perfectly lost, and altogether in darkness, and is brought at last to yield the case and stand still and do nothing but call for help, that if possible any one may hear, and lead him in the wilderness. For this end God leads men into the wilderness before he speaks comfortably to them. The troubles which they have for sin tend to bring them to be sensible how justly God may cast them off for ever; and this brings them to reflect on their sins; for these are the things of which they are afraid. When a man is terribly afraid of things with which he is surrounded, this engages his eyes to behold; he looks intensely on them, and sees more and more how frightful and terrible they are. When they are in fear, they take much more notice of their sins than at other times. They think more how wickedly they have lived, and observe more the corrupt and wicked working of their own hearts, and so are more and more sensible what vile creatures they are. This makes them more and more sensible how angry God is, and how terrible his anger is. They try to appease and to reconcile God by their own righteousness, but it fails. God still appears as an angry God, refusing to hear their prayers, or appear for their help, till they despair in their own righteousness, and yield the case; and by more and more of a sight of themselves are brought to confess that they lie justly exposed to damnation, and have nothing by which to defend themselves. God appears more and more as a terrible being to them, till they have done with any imaginations, that they have any thing sufficient to recommend them, or reconcile them to such a God. Thus God is wont first to bring the soul into trouble by reason of sin, and so to humble the soul, before he gives true hope and comfort in conversion.

2. This hope and comfort are given upon the slaying of the troubler. Whatever troubles there are for sin, yet if the troubler

is not slain, it cannot be expected but that there will be trouble still. Before there will be no true comfort. The soul may return to stupidity and carelessness, and may receive a false peace and hope, and sin be kept alive; but no true hope. Persons may be exceedingly troubled for sin, and yet sin be saved alive. Persons may seem to lament they have done thus and thus, and weep many tears, and cry out of their sinfulness and wickedness, and yet the life of sin be whole in them. But if so, they never shall receive true comfort. They may refrain from sin; there may be a great reformation, and exact life for a time; or there may be a total reformation of some particular ways of sin, and yet no true hope; because sin is only restrained; it is not slain. Many men are brought to restrain sin, and to give it slight wounds, who cannot be brought to kill it. Wicked men are loth to kill sin. They have been very goods friends to it ever since they have been in the world, and have always treated it as one of their most familiar and best friends. They have allowed it the best room in their hearts, and have given it the best entertainment they could, and they are very loth to destroy it. But until this be done, God never will give them true comfort. If ever men come to have a true hope, they must do as the children of Israel did by Achan. Joshua vii. 24, 25, 26. "And Joshua and all Israel with him took Achan, the son of Zerah, and the silver and the garment, and the wedge of gold, and his sons and his daughters, and his oxen, and his asses, and his sheep, and his tent, and all that he had; and they brought them unto the valley of Achor. And Joshua said, why hast thou troubled us? The Lord shall trouble thee this day. And all Israel stoned him with stones, and burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. And they raised over him a great heap of stones unto this day. So the Lord turned from the fierceness of his anger. Wherefore the name of that place was called the valley of Achor unto this day." So if ever men come to have any true hope, they must take sin which is the troubler, and all which belongs to it, even that, which seems most dear and precious, though it be as choice as Achan's silver and wedge of gold, and utterly destroy them, and burn them with fire, to be sure to make a thorough end of them, as it were, bury them and raise over them a great heap of stones, to lay a great weight upon them, to make sure of it that they shall never rise more. Yea, and thus they must serve all his sons and daughters. They must not save some of the accursed brood alive. All the fruits of sin must be forsaken. There must not be some particular lust, some dear sinful enjoyment, some pleasant child of sin spared; but all must be stoned and burned. If we do thus, we may expect to have trouble cease, and light to arise, as it was in the camp of Israel after slaying the troubler.

Inquiry. Here it may be inquired, What is implied in slaying sin at conversion? And it implies these several things:

1. There must be a conviction of the evil of it as against God. All is carried on by conviction. Those legal troubles, which are before conversion, arise from some conviction of the being of sin, and the guilt and danger of it. And the slaying of sin is by conviction of its evil and hateful nature. To slay the troubler, we must find him out, as the children of Israel did before they slew Achan. They rose early in the morning, and searched, and brought all Israel by their tribes; and then searched the tribe, which was taken by families, and the family by particular persons, and so found him.

2. It is to have the heart turned from, and turned against, it in hatred. The troubler is never slain, but by a thorough and saving change of heart and renovation of nature, so that, that which before loved sin and chose it, may now hate and abhor it, and may disrelish it, and all its ways, and especially hate their former ways of sin.

3. Forsaking and renouncing it. Let men pretend what they may, their hearts are not turned from sin, if they do not forsake it. He is not converted, who is not really come to a disposition utterly to forsake all ways of sin. If ever sinners have true hope and comfort, they must take a final leave of sin, as the children of Israel did of the Egyptians at the Red Sea. Persons may have a great deal of trouble from sin, and many conflicts and struggles with it, and seem to forsake it for a time, and yet not forsake it finally; as the children of Israel had with the Egyptians. They had a long struggle with them before they were freed from them. How many judgments did God bring upon the Egyptians, before they would let them go? And sometimes Pharaoh seemed as if he would let them go; but yet when it came to the proof he refused. And when they departed from Rameses doubtless they thought then they had got rid of them. They did not expect to see them any more. But when they arrived at the Red Sea, and looked behind them, they saw them pursuing them. They found it a difficult thing wholly to get rid of them. But when they were drowned in the Red Sea, then they took an everlasting leave of them. The king and all the chiefs of them were dead; and therefore God said to them, Exodus xiv. 13. "The Egyptians, whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." So sinners must not only part with sin for a little time, but they must forsake it for ever, and be willing never to see or have any thing to do with their old sinful ways and enjoyments. They must forsake that which is their iniquity, the sin, which most easily besets them, and to which by their constitution or custom

they have been most addicted, which has been, as it were, the dearest of all, and most respected, as a king among the army of sins; though that must be slain too, as Pharaoh, the king of the Egyptians, was in the Red Sea. And we must not do as Saul did, when God sent him to kill the Amalekites; but he saved the king of the Amalekites alive, which cost him his kingdom.

4. It implies embracing Christ, and trusting in him as the Saviour from sin. We must look to him not only as a Saviour from the punishment of sin, but we must receive and embrace him as a Saviour from sin itself. We cannot deliver ourselves from sin. We cannot slay this enemy of ourselves. He is too strong an enemy for us. We can no more slay sin ourselves, than the children of Israel who were themselves a poor feeble company, a mixed multitude, unprepared to resist such a force, could themselves slay Pharaoh, and all his mighty army with chariots and horsemen. It was Christ in the pillar of cloud and fire, who fought for them. They had nothing to do but trust in him. Exodus xiv. 4. "The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace." They could never have drowned the Egyptians in the sea. It was Christ who did it; for the pillar of cloud stood between them and the Israelites, and when they were up out of the sea, then Christ brought on them the waters of the sea. Our enemies must be drowned in the all-sufficient fountain, and, as it were, sea of Christ's blood, as the Egyptians were in the Red Sea, and then we may sing, as the children of Israel did in the day when they came up out of the land of Egypt. When sin is thus slain, then God is wont to open a door of hope, a door through which there flashes a sweet light out of heaven upon the soul. Then comfort arises, and then is three a new song in the mouth, even praise unto God.

II. God is wont to bestow hope and comfort from time to time in the same manner on Christians.

In the consideration of this matter I would show,

1. That Christians are frequently in darkness, and their hope is often greatly obscured.

2. That it is sin which is the occasion of this darkness.

3. Their darkness is not perpetual, but God is wont to cause hope and comfort to arise again.

4. Their trouble is commonly much increased a little before the renewal of light and hope.

5. That hope and comfort are renewed to them on the slaying of the troubler.

1. It is often the case that Christians are under darkness, and their hope is greatly clouded. God is wont to give his saints hope and comfort at their first conversion, which sometimes re-

mains without any great interruption for a considerable time And some Christians live abundantly more in the light than others. Some for many years together have but little darkness. God is pleased to distinguish them from their neighbours. He mercifully keeps them from those occasions of darkness, into which he suffers others to fall, and gives them of the light of his countenance. God exercises his sovereignty in this matter, as he does in giving converting grace: as he bestows that on whom he pleases, so he bestows on some of those who are converted, more light, on others, less, according as it pleases him. But many Christians meet with a great deal of darkness and see times, in which their hopes are much clouded. Sometimes the sweet and comfortable influences of God's spirit are withdrawn. They were wont to have spiritual discoveries made of God and Christ to their souls, but now they have none. Their minds seem to be darkened, and they cannot see spiritual things, as they have done in times past. Formerly, when they read the scriptures, they used often to have light come in, and they seemed to have an understanding and relish for what they read, and were filled with comfort. But now when they read, it is all a dead letter, and they have no taste for it, and are obliged to force themselves to read; they seem to have no pleasure in it, but it is a mere task and burden. Formerly they used to have passages of scripture come to their minds, when they were not reading, which brought much light and sweetness with them. But now they have none. Formerly they used to feel the sweet exercises of grace. They could trust in God, and could find a spirit of resignation to his will, and had love drawn forth, and sweet longings after God and Christ, and a sweet complacence in God; but now they are dull and dead. Formerly they used to meet with God in the ordinances of his house: it was sweet to sit and hear the word preached, and it seemed to bring light and life with it; they used to feel life and sweetness in public prayers, and their hearts were elevated in singing God's praises. But now it is otherwise. Formerly they used to delight in the duty of prayer: the time, which they spent in their closet between God and their own souls was sweet to them. But now when they go thither, they do not meet God; and they take no delight in drawing near to God in their closets. When they do pray, it seems to be a mere lifeless, heartless performance. They utter such and such words, but they seem to be nothing but words; their hearts are not engaged. Their minds are continually wandering and going to and fro, after one vanity and another. With this decay of the exercise of grace their hope greatly decays; and the evidences of their piety are exceedingly clouded. When they look into their hearts,

it seems to them that they can see nothing there, from which they should hope; and when they consider after what manner they live, it seems to them to argue, that they have no grace. They have but little of any thing which is new, to furnish comfortable evidence to them of their good estate; and as to their old evidences, they are greatly darkened. Their former experience, in which they took great comfort, looks dim, and a great way off, and out of sight to them. They have almost forgotten it, and have no pleasure in thinking or speaking of it. And sometimes true Christians are brought into terrible distress. They are not only deprived of their former comforts, and have their former hopes obscured, but they have inward distressing darkness. God does not only hide his face, but they have a sense of his anger. He seems to frown upon them. So it appears to have been with David. Psalms xlii. 7. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me." So with Heman. Psalms lxxxviii. 5, 6. "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves."

2. It is sin which is the occasion of this trouble and darkness. Whenever the godly meet with such darkness, there is some Achan in their souls which is the occasion of all this; and this is sin. This is the occasion of the darkness of the godly, as well as the troubles which natural men have under awakenings. It is not for want of love in God towards his saints, or readiness to grant comfort to them; neither is God's hand shortened, that it cannot save, nor his ear heavy, that he cannot hear. It is their sin, which hides God's face from them. Isaiah lix. 1, 2. Sin is the occasion of this darkness of the saints, in these three ways.

1. Sometimes it is owing to the weakness and small degree of grace infused in conversion, and the strength of remaining corruption. The work of God is the same in all who are converted, so far that their sin is mortified, and that which reigned before does not reign now. The heart is changed from darkness to light, and from death to life, and turned from sin to God. And yet the work is very different with respect to the degree of mortification of sin, and the degree of grace which is infused. Some have more spiritual light given in their first conversion than others; have greater discoveries, and are brought at once to a much greater acquaintance with God, and have their hearts more humbled, and more weaned from sin and the world, and more filled with the love of God and Christ, and are brought nearer to heaven than others. Some at first conversion have a much more eminent work of grace in their

hearts than others. Some have emphatically but little grace infused, and consequently their corruptions are left in much greater strength: when it is so, it is no wonder that such have a weaker hope, and less light and comfort than others. The natural tendency of indwelling sin in the saints, is to cloud and darken the mind; and therefore, the more of it remains, the more will it have this effect. Persons can know their own good estate in no other way than by seeking, or perceiving grace in their hearts. But certainly the less of it there is, with the more difficulty will it be seen or felt. As indwelling sin prevails, so does it the more obscure and cloud grace, as a great smoke clouds and hides a spark. And therefore the more there is of this indwelling sin, the more will grace be hid. The greater the strength in which corruption is left, the more rare will be the good frames which the godly have, and the more frequent and of longer continuance will be their times of darkness. It may be, the darkness with which the saints meet, is from some particular corruption, which has always hitherto been in too great prevalence and strength, and has never yet been mortified to such a degree, but that it continues a great troubler in the soul. Grace being weak, the sin of the constitution takes advantage, whether that be a proud and haughty temper, or a covetous spirit, or an addictedness to some sensuality, or a peevish, fretful, discontented spirit, or ill temper, or a quarrelsome spirit, or disposition to high resentment. Or whether it be any other corrupt disposition, which is the sin to which they are chiefly exposed by natural temper, or by their education and former custom. If the grace which is infused at conversion, be comparatively weak, this constitutional sin will take the advantage, and will dreadfully cloud the mind, and hinder spiritual comfort, and bring trouble and darkness. There is a great variety in the work of grace upon men's hearts, as to the particular discoveries which are then given, and the particular graces which are in chief exercise; whereby it comes to pass, that some in their conversion are more assisted against one corruption, and others against another. Some in their conversion, as well as in the manner of their experience from time to time, have more of the exercise of one grace, and others more sensible exercises of another. And whatever that grace be of which they have the most lively exercises, they are thereby most assisted against that particular corruption which is its opposite. Hence some particular corruptions may be left in much greater prevalence than others, and so be a greater occasion of darkness. Thus some, in the particular experiences which they have, may not be so especially assisted against pride as others, whereby their pride may take occasion to work. And when they have had spiritual discoveries and

comfort, they may be lifted up with them. And this may be an occasion of displeasing and grieving his Holy Spirit, and so of their having a great deal of darkness. They may not have seen so much of their own emptiness as some others, and so their corruption may work much more by self-confidence than others; and no wonder that self-confident persons meet with darkness. No wonder that when men trust in themselves for light and grace, that their confidence fails, and they go without that for which they trusted in themselves.

2. Sometimes the saints are in great darkness on occasion of some gross transgression into which they have fallen. So it was with David, when he fell into gross sin in the matter of Uriah. He exceedingly quenched the influences of the spirit of God by it, and God withdrew those influences from him, and the comforts which they had imparted; as appears by his earnestly praying for their restoration. Psalms li. 12. "Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with thy free spirit." When Christians fall into gross transgression, it is commonly the fact that an exceedingly deep darkness follows.

3. When they do not fall into any particular gross and scandalous transgression, yet they sometimes exceedingly darken their minds by corrupt frames and evil habits, into which they fall. There is much remaining corruption in the hearts of Christians, and oftentimes they get into very ill frames. Some particular corruptions grow very prevalent. Sometimes they grow proud and conceited of themselves, either on account of their own godliness, and the good opinion others have of them, or on some other account. Sometimes they fall into a worldly frame, and spiritual things grow more tasteless to them, and their hearts are desperately bent on the acquisition of worldly good. Sometimes their minds grow light and vain, and their affections are wholly fixed on the vanities of youth, on dress and gayety, and fashion. Some, because their minds are not occupied as once they were, with spiritual enjoyments and delights, sweetly meditating on heavenly things, breathing and longing after them, and earnestly seeking them, become the slaves of their sensual appetites. Others grow contentious and quarrelsome, are often angry with those around them, and cherish habitual rancour against them in their hearts. They become wilful and obstinate, and stir up strife, and oppose others with vehemence; determining at all hazards to carry their own measures, and delighting to have those who oppose them defeated and humbled. It hurts them to have others prosper. Their minds and hearts are full of turmoil, and heat, and vehemence against one and another. Others fall into a discontented, fretful, and impatient frame at the disposals of Providence. And

oftentimes many of these things go together. And as these persons sink into such unhappy frames in their hearts, so they pursue very sinful courses of conduct. They behave themselves unsuitably, so as to dishonour God, and greatly to wound religion. They do not appear to others to savour of a good spirit. They fall into the practice of allowing themselves too great liberties in indulging their sensual appetites, in the gratification of covetousness and pride, in strife, backbiting, and a violent pursuit after the world. They slide into those corrupt frames and evil ways commonly by means of their first giving way to a slothful spirit. They are not so diligent and earnest in religion as they once were; but indulge their slothful disposition, and discontinue their watch, and so lie open to temptation. Thus ill frames imperceptibly creep upon them, and they insensibly more and more fall into sinful practices. So it was with David. Their sin, into which they fall in consequence of this degenerate and sinful state of the affections and the life, is the occasion of a great deal of darkness. God withdraws his spirit from them, their light goes out, and the evidences of their piety grow dim and obscure. They seem to be in a great measure as they were before they were converted, and they have no sensible communion with God. Thus sin is the occasion of trouble and darkness to the Christian.

4. When it is thus with Christians, their trouble is commonly greatly increased a little before the renewal of hope and comfort. When sin prevails, as has been said in the hearts of Christians, they are not wont to be easy and quiet like secure sinners. There is commonly more or less of an inward struggling and uneasiness. Grace in the heart, though it be dreadfully oppressed, and, as it were, overwhelmed, yet will be resisting its enemy and struggling for liberty. So that it is not with Christians in their ill frames, and under the prevalence of corruption, altogether as it is with carnal, wicked men, who are secure. And there is this good reason for it, that the former have a principle of spiritual life in their souls, which the latter have not. Yet Christians in their ill frames may fall into a great deal of security and senselessness; for sin is of a stupifying nature, and wherever it prevails, will have more or less of that effect. When they fall into a sinful, worldly, proud or contentious frame, they are wont to have a great degree of senselessness and stupidity with it. And especially when they fall into gross sins, has it a tendency greatly to stupify the soul. It obviously had this effect on David. He seems to have been strangely stupified, when Nathan came to him with the parable of the rich man, who injuriously took the poor man's ewe lamb from him. He was enraged with the man in the parable, but did

not seem to reflect on himself, or think how parallel his case was with his. And while they are thus senseless, their trouble is not so great; and if they feel the weight of sin, it is not so burdensome to them. But God is wont, before he renews comfort and hope to them, to bring them into greater trouble. As a sinner before his first comfort in his conversion is brought into trouble, so it is wont to be with the saints after their backslidings and decays, before renewed hope and comfort is granted. There is a work of awakening wrought upon them. While they remain in their corrupt frames, they are, as it were, asleep. They are like the ten foolish virgins who slumbered and slept; and, as persons who are asleep, they are unconscious, not sensible, where they are, nor what are their circumstances. Therefore, when God is coming and returning to them by his Spirit, commonly his first work upon them is a work of awakening, to wake them out of sleep, and rouse them to some sensibility, to make them sensible of the great folly of their ways, and how they have displeased and offended God, and what mischief they have done. Thus God leads them into the wilderness, and brings them into the valley of Achor, or trouble. Then they are in greater trouble than they were before, and have more sensible darkness, and more distress abundantly. But yet it is really much better with them now, than before they began to come to themselves. Their circumstances are much more eligible and more hopeful, though sometimes they are in distress almost insupportable. And a little before God renews light and comfort, they have a very great sense of God's anger, and his wrath lies heavy upon them. So it seems to have been with David a little before the restoration of spiritual comfort to him, which made him speak of the bones which God had broken, when he was praying for the renewal of comfort. Psalms li. 8. "Make me to hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice." And probably he has respect to the same thing in Psalm xxxviii. which he calls his psalm to bring to remembrance. Verses 2, 3, 4. "Thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore. There is no soundness in my flesh, because of thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones, because of my sin. For mine iniquities are gone over mine head; as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me." And often when God is about to bring them to themselves, and to restore comfort to them, he first brings them into some very great and sore temporal calamity and trouble, and awakens them by that, and in this first brings them into the wilderness before he speaks comfortably to them. Job xxxiii. 16, &c. "Then he openeth the ears of men, and sealeth their instruction, that he may withdraw man from his purpose, and hide pride from

man. He keepeth back his soul from the pit, and his life from perishing by the sword. He is chastened also with pain upon his bed, and the multitude of his bones with strong pain; so that his life abhorreth bread, and his soul dainty meat. His flesh is consumed away, that it cannot be seen; and his bones, that were not seen, stick out. Yea, his soul draweth near unto the grave, and his life to the destroyers. If there be a messenger with him, an interpreter, one among a thousand, to shew unto man his uprightness, then he is gracious unto him, and saith, deliver him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom. His flesh shall be fresher than a child's; he shall return to the days of his youth. He shall pray unto God, and he shall be favourable unto him, and he shall see his face with joy; for he will render unto man his righteousness. He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not, he will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light. Lo, all these things worketh God oftentimes with man, to bring back his soul from the pit, to be enlightened with the light of the living." Thus those who are very weak in grace sometimes meet with great and sore trouble, both of body and mind, which is an occasion of a new work, as it were, of grace upon their hearts; so that they are more eminent saints afterwards, and have much more comfort.

3. When the saints are in darkness, their darkness is not perpetual, but God will restore hope and comfort to them again. When one of Christ's sheep wanders away, and gets into the wilderness, Christ, the good Shepherd, will not leave him in the wilderness, but will seek him, and will lay him on his shoulders, and bring him home again. We cannot tell how long God may leave his saints in the dark, but yet surely their darkness shall not last for ever; for light is sown to the righteous, and gladness to the upright in heart. Psalms xcvii. 11. God, in the covenant of grace in which they have an interest, has promised them joy and comfort; he has promised them everlasting joy. Isaiah lxi. 7. Satan may be suffered for a time to bring them into darkness, but they shall be brought out again. God may be provoked to hide his face from them for a time; and if it seems long, yet it is indeed but a little time. Isaiah liv. 7, 8. "For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee." Psalms xxx. 5. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

5. Hope and comfort are renewed to them on the slaying of the troubler. All sin is truly mortified in conversion, or has its

death-wounds then. And all the exercises of it afterwards are in some respects, as the efforts and strugglings of a dying enemy. But yet all life is not actually extinct, and therefore it needs to be farther mortified, to receive more deadly wounds. Sin is slain in the godly after trouble and darkness, and before the renewing of comfort in these three ways.

1. It is slain as to former degrees of it. All remains of corruption are not extirpated. Sin does not cease to be in the heart; but it ceases to be any more in such strength as it has been; it ceases to have that prevalence.

2. It is slain as to former ways of exercise. The former ways of sin are forsaken. They are farther afterwards from such ways of sin than ever before. The heart is fortified against them. Thus if a godly man has been in a way of contention and strife, when he comes to himself again, he slays his contention; he kills sin as to that way of exercising it. Or if it be some way of sensuality, when he comes to himself, he will slay his sensuality, and cast it out from him.

3. It is totally and perfectly slain in his will and inclination.

There is that renewed opposition made against it, which implies a mortal inclination and design against it. What the saint seeks when he comes to himself after a time of great declension, is to be the death of sin, which has been so prevalent in him, and perfectly to extirpate it. He acts in what he does as a mortal enemy; and if he does not perfectly destroy it at one blow, it is not for want of inclination, but for want of strength. The godly man does not deal mercifully and tenderly with sin, but as far as in him lies, he deals with it as the children of Israel dealt with Achan, as it were, stones it with stones, and burns it with fire with all which belongs to it. They do not at all spare it, as wicked men do; they aim at the very life, and nothing short of it. The saints' slaying the troubler after great backslidings and ill frames, implies the following things.

1. There is a conviction of the evil of their sin. They are brought to consideration. They think on their ways before they turn their feet. Psal. cxix. 59. They consider how they have behaved themselves, how unworthily, how unfaithful they have been to their profession, how ungratefully, and disagreeably to the mercies they have received. They consider how they have provoked God, and have deserved his wrath. They find the troubler led them to see a great deal more of the sinfulness and corruption of their hearts commonly than before. In this respect the work of God with saints after great declinings is agreeable to his work in the heart of a natural man in order to his conversion.

2. There is a gracious humiliation of soul before God for it. The gracious soul, when convinced of sin after great declensions,

and recovered out of them, is deeply humbled; for it is brought to the dust before God. There is an evangelical repentance; the heart is broken for sin. That sacrifice is offered to God, which David offered rather than burnt offerings after his great fall. Psalms li. 16, 17. "For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." They are brought as Job was, after he had sinned, in complaining of God's dealings with him, to abhor themselves. Job xlii. 6. And they are in a meeker frame, as the Christian Corinthians were, after they had greatly gone out of the way, and had been reproved by the apostle Paul. 2 Cor. vii. 11. "For behold this self-same thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what indignation, yea what fear, yea what vehement desire, yea what zeal, yea what revenge." They were filled with sorrow, and with a kind of indignation, zeal, and spirit of revenge against themselves for their folly, and so ungratefully treating God. When Christians are convinced of their sin after remarkable miscarriages and ill frames, they are commonly convinced of many of the same things of which they were convinced under their first humiliation, but to a greater degree than ever before. They are brought to a new conviction, and a greater conviction than ever before of their own emptiness, and to be sensible what poor, feeble, helpless creatures, and what sinful, vile, utterly unworthy creatures they are, how undeserving they are of any mercy, and how much they deserve God's wrath. And this conviction works by a gracious humbling of the soul. The grace of humility is greatly increased by it, and very commonly they are more poor in spirit, and lowly of heart during all their future life. They see more what cause there is for them to lay their hands on their mouths, and to walk humbly with God, and lie low before him.

3. There is a renewed application to Christ as a Saviour from sin. There is a renewed act of reliance on him for justification, of faith in his blood to cleanse them, and of trust in his righteousness to cover their nakedness and filthiness. And Christ as a Saviour becomes more precious to them. As they have a greater sense of their own emptiness and vileness, so they have a more entire dependence on Christ's fulness.

4. The heart is farther separated from those ways of sin, and more confirmed against them than ever. After it they commonly have a greater dread of it, and greater abhorrence, look upon it more as an enemy, and remember what they have suffered from it; and their hearts are more confirmed against it than ever. They have stronger resolutions to avoid all which savors of the like, and all which might lead to it.

Therefore this is mentioned among the effects of the repentance of the Corinthians after their going astray. "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea what clearing of yourselves, yea what fear, yea what earnest desire." There was a more than ordinary fear and dread of the like sin for the future, and more carefulness to shun it, and a more earnest desire of the contrary. The work of God in the heart of a saint after declension oftentimes in many respects resembles the work of God in a sinner at his conversion; though it is not in all respects like it, because of the great difference in the subject. When the troubler comes to be thus slain after times of trouble and darkness in the godly, then God is wont to open a door of hope. The darkness, which has covered them, which was greatest a little before, is now scattered, and light arises. It may be before there had been a long night of clouds and darkness. But now the clouds begin to scatter, and the sweet refreshing beams begin to break forth, and come down into the heart. The soul, which has been wounded, is now healed. God pours in the oil of comfort. The renewed sense, which is given, of Christ's fulness and sufficiency gives new life and hope and joy. The troubler being slain, God now grants renewed discoveries of his glory, and renewed manifestations of his grace; and the soul, which was before in darkness, is now entertained with sweet views. And now that hope, which was so weakened, and was almost ready to fail, is revived, and greatly confirmed. Now the soul is enabled to take comfort in the promises. Now the saint sees evidences of his own good estate by the renewed manifestations, which God makes of himself, and renewed exercises of grace. Before the soul was greatly exercised with doubts and fears and dark clouds; and much time was spent in reviewing past experiences, and looking over and examining those things, which were formerly regarded as evidences of piety; and all in vain. They pored on past experiences, but to no satisfaction. And the reason was, the troubler was not slain, but still remained alive. But now God gives them new light, and new experiences, which in a few moments do more towards scattering their clouds, and removing their fears, than all their poring on past experiences could do for months, and probably for years. Before their hearts seemed in a great measure dead as to spiritual exercises. But now there is, as it were, new life. Now when they read the scripture, and when they hear the word preached, it is with a savour and relish of it. Now they can find God in his word and ordinances. Now Christ comes to them, and manifests himself to them, and they are admitted again to communion with God. When Christians have comfort and hope thus renewed, their comforts are commonly purer

than ever. Their joys are more humble joys, freer from any mixture and taint of self-righteousness than before.

Having thus shown that God is wont to cause hope and comfort to arise to the soul after trouble and humbling for sin, and upon slaying the troubler, both at first conversion and afterwards, after sad declinings, I would now give the reasons of the doctrine.

1. I would show why God is wont to give comfort after trouble and humbling for sin; or why he is wont to bring the soul into the wilderness before he speaks comfortably to it, and leads it into the valley of Achor, before he opens a door of hope.

1. It is that the soul may be prepared for a confiding application of itself to Christ for comfort. It is the will of God that men should have true hope and comfort conferred upon them in no other way, than by Jesus Christ. It is only by him that sinners have comfort at their conversion; and it is by him only, that the saints have renewed hope and comfort after their declensions. And therefore the way to obtain this comfort is to look to him; to fly for refuge to him. And in order to this, persons have need to be brought to a sense of their necessity of him. And that they may be so, it is needful that they should be sensible of their calamity and misery, that they should be in trouble, and be brought to see their utter helplessness in themselves. And not only natural men, but Christians also, who are fallen into sin, and are in a dead and senseless frame, need something to make them more sensible of their necessity of Christ. Indeed the best are not so sensible of their need of Christ but that they need to be made more sensible; but especially those who are in ill and dead frames and a declining state, need trouble and humbling to make them sensible of their need of Christ, and to prepare their minds for a renewed confiding application to Christ as their only remedy. The godly in such a case are sick with a sore disease, and Christ is the only Physician, who can heal them, and they need to be sensible of their disease, that they may see their need of a physician. They, as well as natural men, need to be in a storm and tempest to make them sensible of their need to fly to him who is a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. A Christian, who wanders away from God, is like Noah's dove, which flew from the ark. She flew about till weary and spent, seeking rest somewhere else, but found no rest for the sole of her foot, and then she returned to the ark. So it is needful that the soul of a godly man, who wanders from Christ, should become weary, and find no rest for the sole of his foot, that so he may see his need of returning to Christ. Therefore it is said concerning the children of Israel in Hosea ii. 6. "Therefore be-

hold I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths." And in our context, "She shall follow after her lovers, but she shall not overtake them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them. Then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me, than now." When gracious souls wander from Christ, their husband, following after other lovers, God is wont to bring them into trouble and distress, and make them see, that their other lovers cannot help them, that so they may see, that it is best for them to return to their first husband.

2. Another end of God in it is, that comfort and hope may be the more prized, when obtained. We see in temporal things, that the worth and value of any enjoyment is learned by the want of it. He who is sick, knows the worth of health. He, who is in pain, knows how to prize ease. He, who is in a storm at sea, knows how to prize safety on shore. And people, who are subject to the grievances of war, know how to value peace. He, who endures the hardships of captivity and slavery, is thereby taught how to value liberty. And so it is in spiritual things. He, who is brought to see his misery in being without hope, is prepared to prize hope when obtained. He, who is brought into distress through fear of hell and God's wrath, is the more prepared to prize the comfort, which arises from the manifestation of the favour of God, and a sense of safety from hell. He, who is brought to see his utter emptiness and extreme poverty and necessity, and his perishing condition on that account, is thoroughly prepared to prize and rejoice in the manifestation of a fulness in Christ. And those godly persons, who are fallen into corrupt and senseless frames, greatly stand in need of something to make them more sensible of their want of spiritual comfort and hope. Their living as they do shows that they have too little sense of the worth and value of that comfort, and those inestimable spiritual and saving blessings, which God has bestowed upon them; otherwise they never would deal so ungratefully with God, who has bestowed them. If they did not greatly err in slighting spiritual comfort, as the children of Israel did manna, their hearts would never, to such a degree, have gone out after vanity, and earthly enjoyments and carnal delights. They need to be brought into trouble and darkness to make them sensible of the worth of hope and comfort, and to teach them to prize it. They need to be brought into the wilderness, and left for a time to wander and suffer hunger and thirst in a barren desert to teach them how to prize their vineyards. A sense of the pardon of sin, and the favour of God, and a hope of eternal life, do not afford comfort and joy to the soul any farther than they are valued and prized. So

that the trouble and darkness, which go before comfort, serve to render the joy and comfort the greater when obtained, and so are in mercy to those, for whom God intends comfort.

3. It is so ordered that divine power and grace may be acknowledged in giving hope and comfort. There is naturally in men an exceeding insensibility of their dependence on God, and a great disposition to ascribe those things which they enjoy to themselves, or to second causes. This disposition reigns in natural men. They are wholly under the power of it. Therefore they need to be taught their own helplessness, and utter insufficiency, and utter unworthiness. Otherwise, if hope and comfort should be bestowed upon them, they would surely ascribe all to themselves, or the creature, and so would be lifted up by it, and would not give God the glory. Therefore it is God's manner first to humble sinners before he comforts them. And all this self-confident disposition is not extirpated out of the hearts of the godly, and especially when they get into ill frames does it prevail. And it is very requisite, that before any remarkable comfort is bestowed upon them, they should be the subjects of renewed humbling. They need renewedly to see what helpless creatures they are, that so, when light is bestowed, they may be sensible how it is owing to God, and not to themselves, or any other ; and that they may, by their troubles and humblings, be prepared the more to admire God's power and mercy and free and rich grace to them. While men are continued in fulness in a fruitful land, they will not learn their own helplessness ; and therefore God will cast them out of this fulness into a wilderness. This is plainly intimated to be the reason of God's so dealing with the children of Israel, as is said in the text. The church of Israel, before God thus led her into the wilderness, did not ascribe her comforts to God, as in the eighth verse. "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold." But they ascribed them to her idols. Verse fifth. "For she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink." And verse twelfth. "These are my rewards, that my lovers have given me." For this reason it is that God takes away those things, as in verse ninth. "Therefore will I return and take away my corn in the time thereof, and my wine in the season thereof, and will recover my wool and my flax given to cover her nakedness." And verses 11, 12. "I will also cause all her mirth to cease, her feast days, her new moons, and her sabbaths, and all her solemn feasts. And I will destroy her vines and her fig-trees, whereof she hath said, these are my rewards that my lovers have given me; and I will make them a forest, and the

beasts of the field shall eat them." God took them away, and turned her vineyards into a forest, and made her sensible that they were from him; and then he restored them again. For these reasons God is wont to bring souls into trouble, and to humble them for sin before he comforts them. I proceed,

2. To give the reasons why hope and comfort are not obtained till sin, which is the troubler, is slain.

1. While sin is harboured and preserved alive, it tends to provoke God to frown and express his anger. Sin is God's mortal enemy. It is that which his soul infinitely hates, and to which he is an irreconcileable enemy. And therefore if we harbour this, and suffer it to live in our hearts, and to govern our practice, we can expect no other than that it will provoke God's frowns. Spiritual comfort consists in the manifestation of God's favour, and in friendly communion with God. But how can we expect this at the same time that we harbour his mortal enemy? We see what God said to Joshua, while Achan was alive. Joshua vii. 12. "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed thing from among you."

2. The natural tendency of sin is to darken the mind, and trouble the conscience. There is nothing which wounds a well informed conscience but sin. Sin is the enemy of grace, and therefore the natural tendency of it is to oppose and keep down the exercises of grace, and so to extinguish spiritual comfort; for spiritual comfort comes in no other way than by the exercise of grace. That which prevents the exercises of grace darkens the evidences of a man's good estate. For there are no evidences of this but the exercises of grace. Sin does as much tend to keep out spiritual comfort, as clouds tend to hide the light of the sun. And therefore it is necessary that this should be removed in order to our receiving light and comfort. It is impossible in its own nature that any should have spiritual light and comfort before sin is mortified. If sinners had comfort while sin is in reigning power, it could not be spiritual comfort; for spiritual comfort is the same with gracious comfort. But how can there be gracious comfort where grace has no place? But if there be grace, sin will not be in reigning power; for the nature of grace is to mortify sin. And as there can be no spiritual comfort without a degree of mortification of sin in those in whom sin is mortified, spiritual comfort cannot be any more than in proportion as sin is mortified.

3. A hope of eternal life, if given before the slaying of sin, would be misimproved and abused. If it were possible that a sinner could obtain a title to eternal life before sin was mortified, and so could have his own safety and God's favour manifested to him, he would only improve it to encourage and embolden himself in sin. Hope, if they had it then, would have a pernicious

influence and tendency. Till sin is slain, they stand in need of fear to restrain sin. If fear were once gone before sin is slain, they would soon run into all manner of wickedness, and without restraint. And so Christians themselves, while they are in corrupt frames, stand in need of fear to restrain sin; for at such times love is in a great degree dormant. It is of necessity that persons should have some principle or other to restrain them from sin. But there is no principle which can be effectual to restrain men from sin any farther than it is in exercise. If love is not in exercise it will not restrain men. So that at such times the saints need fear. And therefore God has wisely ordered it, that at such times their evidences should be darkened, and their hopes clouded, that they may have fear, when love is not awake, to restrain them. The godly themselves, if their hope were all alive at those times when they are in carnal and thoughtless frames, and grace is asleep, would be in great danger to abuse their hope, and take encouragement from it to indulge their lusts, or at least, to be the less careful to restrain and resist them. For we see that in such frames, though their hopes are clouded, and they have a considerable degree of fear, yet they are careless and negligent. But how much more so would they be, if they had no fear to restrain them!

APPLICATION.

I. Use of instruction.

1. Hence we may observe the wonderful wisdom of God in his dealings with the souls of men. When we consider what has been said, with the reasons of it, we may see just cause to admire the divine wisdom in his ordinary dealings with respect to those for whom he intends comfort. His wisdom is admirable in his dealings with natural men in fitting and preparing them for comfort, in bringing them into such troubles and distress, and hedging up their way with thorns, as it is expressed in the context, and leaving them in their distress to follow after their lovers, their idols, without being able to overtake them; in taking away their vineyards, and all those things in which they trusted, and making them a forest; and so showing them what poor destitute, helpless creatures they are, before he gives them comfort. And so we may well admire the divine wisdom in his method of dealing with his saints, who decline and fall into sin, or get into corrupt frames and ill ways. God knows how to order things concerning them; and there is a marvellous wisdom observable in his manner of dealing with them in such cases. We may well admire how wisely God orders things in what has been said, for his own glory, to secure the glory due to his power and free grace, and to bring men to a sense of their dependence on him, and to ascribe all to him. And how he orders things for the glory of his Son, that he may have all the glory of the salvation of men, who is worthy of it, in that

he laid down his life for their salvation. And also how wisely God orders things for the good of his own elect people, how he brings good out of evil, and light out of darkness. How wisely he consults their good and comfort in those things, which appear to them to be most against them. How he wisely prepares them for good, and makes way for their receiving comfort, and for its being the more sweet, the more prized and delighted in, when it is obtained. And oftentimes in bringing about this in those things, which they think at the time to be signs of God's hatred. And how wisely God orders things for preventing men's abusing a sense of their own safety, to giving the reins to their lusts. It is ordered so, that at those times when sin prevails, and there would be danger of this, the evidences of their safety are hid from their eyes, and the fear of hell comes on to keep them in awe; and that hope and comfort should be given only at such times, and in such manner that they should have influence to draw men off from sin, and to prompt them to diligence in duty and the service of God; and that when it would have most of this tendency, then they should have most of it. When we consider these things, we may well cry out with the apostle, "O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out."

2. Hence we may learn, that souls, who are in darkness, and as it were, in a wilderness, have no cause to be discouraged. For by the doctrine we learn that this is the way often, in order to hope and comfort. Persons are very often ready to be discouraged by this. God seems to frown. They have a sense of his anger. They cry to him, and he does not seem to hear their prayers. They have been striving for relief, but it seems to be to no purpose. They are in such circumstances, that every thing looks dark; every thing seems to be against them. They are lost in a wilderness; they cannot find the way out. They have gone round and round, and returned again to the same place. They know not which way to turn themselves, or what to do. Their hearts are ready to sink. But you may gather encouragement from this doctrine; for by it you may learn that you have no cause to despair. For it is frequently God's manner to bring persons into such circumstances, in order to prepare them for hope and comfort. The children of Israel were ready to be discouraged at the Red Sea, when they saw Pharaoh and his hosts pursuing them. But it was only to prepare them for the greater joy after their deliverance. Joshua and the hosts of Israel were ready to be discouraged when they were smitten at Ai, as you may see in Joshua vii. 5, &c. So that you, who are in the wilderness, may take encouragement from hence, still earnestly to seek God, and hope for light and comfort in his time.

II. Use of self-examination. By this persons may try their hopes and comforts, whether they are of the right kind. If they are such as have arisen after the manner, as is spoken of in the doctrine; if it is a hope which you found in the valley of Achor, in the sense which has been explained, it is a sign that it is a hope, which God has given you, and so a hope which you are not to cast away; but which you are to retain, and rejoice in, and bless God for it. Therefore particularly inquire concerning your hopes and comforts, whether they have arisen in your souls when humbled for sin, and in the slaying of sin.

1. Inquire whether your hopes and comforts have been given you upon your soul's being humbled for sin. You may try this by three things.

1. Whether you have seen what a miserable, helpless creature you were. When your hopes and comforts have arisen in your heart, has it been upon your soul's receiving such a sight of yourself; or has your hope been accompanied with such a sense of soul? When hope was given at first, was it implanted in a heart thus prepared? And when you have had remarkable comfort and joy from time to time, has your joy been accompanied with such a sense and frame of mind? At the same time that you have had a strong hope of God's favour, and that Christ was yours, have you been nothing in your own eyes; have you at such times appeared to yourself to be a poor, little, helpless, unworthy creature, deserving nothing at the hands of God? And do not only inquire whether in your own apprehension you had some such sight of yourself at first, before your first comfort. If you ever had a right understanding of yourself, of your own heart, and your own state, you will never wholly lose it. It will revive from time to time. If you had it when you received your first comfort, the same sense will come again; when your comforts are revived, this will revive with them. If the first joy was granted to a heart thus prepared, there will from time to time be a sense of your own emptiness and worthlessness, arising with your joys and comforts. It will be with a deep sense of what a poor, miserable, and exceedingly sinful creature you are. True comfort is wont to come in such a manner. There is usually a self-emptying, a soul-abasing, sense of heart accompanying it. So that at the same time that God lifts up the soul with comfort, and joy, and inward sweetness, he casts it down with abasement. Evangelical and gracious humiliation and spiritual comfort are companions, which go one with the other, and keep company together. When one comes, the other is wont to come with it. It is not wont to be so with false comforts and joys. But pride and self-fulness are wont to be the companions of false comfort. Indeed, there may be a counterfeit abasement going with it. But if you examine it, you will find,

that that very seeming abasement or humiliation lifts the man up, and fills him full of himself. The hypocrite in the times of his greatest joy, and most confident hopes, looks large in himself. His thoughts are very busily employed about his own excellencies, how holy he is, how eminent a saint he is, how much better he is, than most of his neighbours, how there are few equal to him; and therefore how it must be that God loves him better, than most others; how much God distinguishes him, how much he experiences, and how good he is, and what delight he takes in them on that account.

But true spiritual comfort works in another way. Gracious joy and poverty of spirit go hand in hand, and rejoice, as it were, in each other's company. The godly may at some times have comforts and joys, which do not accompany such abasement. They may be lifted up with joy and conceit of, and confidence in, themselves at the same time. But those joys are not spiritual, they are hypocritical, joys. Such comforts are not from the spirit of God. A godly man may have false joys. He is liable to this exercise of corruption, as well as others. And there may be a mixture of one with the other, or false joy and pride may take occasion from true ones, afterwards to appear. But a gracious joy is linked together with poverty of spirit, and never forsakes it. And hence,

2. You may try this by examining what your hopes and comforts are built upon; whether on Christ only, or on your own righteousness. If you would know of what kind your comforts are, follow them up to the fountain, and see what is their source and spring. If you would know of what kind your hope is, examine the bottom of it, and see upon what foundation it stands. If your hope is that which has been given in the valley of Achor, your own righteousness is not the foundation of it. Inquire therefore what it is, which gives you ease with respect to your past sins, what it is which quiets your conscience about them. Is it any sense you have of the free and sovereign and infinite grace and mercy of God in Christ? Is it what you have seen in Christ, or the gospel of his grace, which has lightened your burden with respect to your sins? Or is it that now you think with yourself that you have done such and such things, or have met with such things, have such workings of affection towards God, that you are become lovely in his sight, so that he, seeing what holy affections and experiences your heart has been filled with, and what discoveries you have had, he is on that account reconciled to you, and you are become lovely in his eyes? What makes you hope that you are in favour with God? Is it because you conceive of God as looking down from heaven upon your heart, on your gracious experiences, and so being as it were, taken with, and receiving

you into his favour on account of that? Or is your hope of God's favour built on a sense, which you have of Christ's worthiness, and the saving mercy of God in him, and his faithfulness to the promises, which he has made through him?

3. Inquire concerning the effect of your comforts, whether they cause an ardent disposition and desire to exalt God, and to lie low before him. True comforts and joys, which are from the spirit of God, and are well founded, are wont to work after this manner. They excite an inward intense desire, that God may be exalted, and to lie in the dust. Such a one as the Psalmist seems to have had, when he says, Psalms cxv. 1, "Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory." The repeating of the expression seems to show how ardent his heart was. When God is pleased to lift up the light of his countenance upon the soul, and to impart inward sweetness from a manifestation of his glory, there is wont to be an inward longing to be in the dust. At such times the Christian sees how it becomes him to be humble, and how worthy God and Christ are of all the glory, more than he does at other times. He perceives and laments that he cannot bow enough; that he is not abased as low before God as becomes such a sinner as himself. Hence arises an intense desire after self-abasement; and the soul breathes and pants after humiliation before God.

2. Inquire whether your hope and comfort are such as have arisen on the slaying of sin. If your hope is that, which you obtained before this, you obtained it too soon, and had better be without it, than with it. It is not sufficient evidence of your hope, that it was given after much trouble and great terrors, or great relentings of heart for sin, and bewailing that you had done so wickedly, or that it was after reformations, and abstaining from former ways of sin, and a total reformation of some particular evil practices. But if it be a true hope, it was given after the slaying of sin. And in order the better to determine this point, let the following inquiries be made.

1. Whether your hope has been accompanied with a heart and a life turned from sin? Or is there no remarkable difference in this respect now from what there was before? We all own conversion to be a great change; and we have all been sufficiently taught, that the change consists in this; in turning from sin to God. Therefore there must be a great change in this respect. Is there a great change in this respect in you? I do not inquire whether there be a great change in you in respect to hope and comfort; that whereas formerly you did not suppose yourself to be in Christ, and had no hope of it, now you have hope, and a confident hope, which oftentimes is an occasion of new and peculiar joy and elevation of spirit. There may be a great change in you in this respect, and yet you may remain in a Christless state. But

is there a great change with respect to the turning of your heart from sin, and against sin? You may reply to this, "I see still abundance of corruption and wickedness in my heart; and so far is it from being delivered from corruption, that I seem at times to discover more than ever. But whether you see more or less corruption in your heart, is your heart turned against that corruption which you see? Is there a great difference in you in this respect from what there used to be with respect to your being turned against your own sin, and finding within yourself a nature opposite to it, a nature to resist it, to carry it as an uneasy burden? And is your heart turned against yourself for it, in abhorrence of yourself, and in indignation against yourself? And is your will turned from sin, that though you find a great deal of corruption in your heart, yet you do not allow it, you keep a strict watch upon it, and will not let it walk at liberty to appear in your life and conversation? Is there no lust harboured, which is prevalent in you, and which is neglected and suffered to range and to walk on every side? Is there no sin wittingly tolerated? Do you aim strictly to keep all God's commandments; and is that your actual care and watch, that you may avoid every evil, and every false way? and that you may in all things, so far as in you lies, please and honour God? And do you find that this is the tendency of your hope; that your hope has a sanctifying influence upon you, that it turns you against sin, and stirs you up to seek after purity from sin? With respect to most who are here present, who entertain hope, there has been much opportunity for experience in this matter, since you have had your hope, so that one would think by an impartial and strict examination you might be able to answer these inquiries.

2. Those of you, who have obtained your hope again after special and remarkable departings from God, should inquire in what manner hope has been restored. Indeed hypocrites are not so apt to have their hope abated by such things, as those who have a true hope. An hypocrite's hopes and false comforts will subsist, and it may be, continue as lively as ever under such great sins, and such a course of ill practices, as if a godly man should fall into them, would bring him into exceeding darkness. Some hypocrites will live in very immoral ways, and yet keep up their confidence, seem not to have their hope much shaken, and boast of as much comfort and joy at such times as at any other. But this is not the manner of a true comfort. A true comfort, which flows from the exercise and the breathings of the spirit of God in the heart, must, of necessity at such times, be exceedingly suppressed; and commonly great trouble and darkness is the effect. But if it has not been altogether thus with you, but you have found that at times when you have greatly sinned and gone on in ill practices, your hope

has decayed, and in the time of it your conscience told you that the way in which you lived was contrary to known rules, and so was in doubt about your hope; but since that you have grown strong again in your hope, inquire in what manner you have obtained your hope again. Unsound professors in such cases are not wont to obtain hope again in the same manner as the truly godly do in a deep humbling for sin and in slaying the troubler as has been described. But it may be only this, that now they do better than they did, and so hope comes again. If they lived in a way of some vile sensuality for a time, and afterwards cease to do so, they look on their reformation as an atonement; and so their hope is renewed without any humbling or abasement, without any special convictions of the evil of their ways, any special repentance, or renewed sense of their own vileness, or any renewed flying to the mercy of God in Christ for refuge, or any further alienation of their hearts from those evil ways, in which they have walked. If your comforts and confidence have been renewed after remarkable aberrations from the way of duty without something of this nature, it is to be feared that you make your own righteousness the ground of your hope and comfort.

3. Inquire, whether at those times, when you have most hope and comfort, above all others, you are most disposed to be careful to avoid sin, and to strive to live holy. Sometimes the hope of hypocrites is very confident; and therefore the degree of confidence, which attends a hope is no certain evidence of its truth and genuineness. But we should examine what effect this strong confidence has upon us. Do we find, when our hope is strongest and our comfort greatest, that then our hearts are most set against sin, and that then we feel the greatest desires to live holy, and have most of a disposition to keep a strict watch, and maintain an earnest warfare against sin, and are most desirous in every thing to do our duty? Or do we find, on the contrary, when our hope is strong and we are most satisfied that our condition is safe, that then we are least careful to avoid sin, and are least disposed to take pains to curb our lusts, and resist temptation, or lay ourselves in the way of duty? If it be thus, it is a very bad sign, and a black mark on our hopes and comforts. A true hope has a tendency to prompt him, who has it to purify himself, and watch and strive more earnestly against all impurity. 1 John iii. 3. "He that hath this hope in him purifieth himself." They are condemned who, because they think they are righteous, and so that they shall certainly have eternal life, will trust in that hope to give themselves the greater liberty in sin. Ezekiel xxxiii. 13. "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be re-

membered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die."

III. Use of direction. If it be so, that God is wont to cause hope and comfort to arise after trouble and humbling for sin, and upon slaying the troubler, this may be of direction to souls under spiritual trouble and darkness, what course to pursue for hope and comfort.

1. Thoroughly to renounce and forsake all ways of sinful behaviour. For you have heard that hope and comfort are never to be expected, till sin is slain or forsaken. He who is not thorough in his reformation, cannot reasonably hope for comfort, how much soever he may abound in some particular duties. Persons who are under awakenings, and would seek a true hope of salvation, should in the first place see, that they thoroughly renounce every wicked practice. They should search their ways and consider what is wrong in them: what duties they have omitted, which ought to have been done; and what practices they have allowed, which ought to be forsaken: and should immediately reform, retaining no one way of sin, denying all ungodliness, omitting nothing which is required; and should see that they persevere in it, that it be not merely a temporary short-lived restraint, but an everlasting renunciation. This is the way to have the troubler slain.

2. Earnestly to seek humiliation. To that end they should labour to be convinced of sin. They should be much engaged in searching their own hearts, and keeping a watchful eye upon them. They should not rest in their own efforts, but earnestly seek to God to give them a right sight of themselves, and a right conviction of sin, and show them that they have deserved God's everlasting wrath. And in order to this they should carefully watch against backsliding; for backsliding prevents humiliation. If there has been any progress made by the conviction of God's spirit towards it, it is all lost by backsliding. This again blinds and stupifies the heart, and sets the man further than ever from a right knowledge of himself, and sight of his own heart.

3. To search and endeavour to find out the troubler. You have heard that when the godly are in darkness, it is not for want of love in God to them, or a readiness in him to give them comfort; but that sin is doubtless the cause of their darkness in one way, or another. Their troubler lies at their own door. There is doubtless some troubler in the camp, which causes God to withdraw. And therefore if you would have light revive, and have the comfortable presence of God again, the first thing which you do must be to search, and find out the troubler. Many, when they are in darkness, proceed in a wrong way. They go to examining past experience. And that they should do; but what is wrong in it is, that they do that only. They spend their time in seeking for

something in themselves, which is good; whereas they ought to spend more of it in seeking out that which is bad. Whatever good there is, they are never likely to find it out, till they find out the sin, which obscures and hides it. And whatever they reflect upon, which they formerly thought was good, is not likely to afford any satisfaction to them, till that bad thing be removed out of the way, which troubled them. They wonder what the cause is, that they are so in the dark. They verily thought in time past, that they were right, and that they had experienced a right work of God's spirit on their hearts, and thought that they were the children of God. But now God hides his face from them, and they wonder what is the matter; as Joshua seemed to be astonished when Israel was smitten down at Ai. Sometimes they almost conclude, that it is because they are not the children of God. They pray to God to renew his comforts to them, and spend much time. And they ought to pray. But they have more need to do something else. Joshua spent a great deal of time in prayer, when Israel was troubled. He fell upon his face till eventide, complaining to God about his withdrawing from them. But God says to him, Joshua vii. 10, 11, "Get thee up; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face?" As much as to say, you had more need to be doing something else, than lie there. "Israel hath sinned, and they have also transgressed my covenant, which I commanded them; for they have even taken of the accursed thing." And verse thirteenth. "Up, sanctify yourselves." This teaches you, who are under darkness, and have your hopes darkened, and comforts deadened, what you should do. You must arise and search, and find out the troubler. If you do not do this, it will signify nothing to you to lie crying and complaining to God about your darkness. You have other business which you have more need to do, though prayer should not be left undone. Let me beseech you, therefore, to be thorough in this. You have need to be thorough, for it is an exceedingly difficult thing to find out the accursed thing in such cases. Men's hearts do like Achan, who hid the accursed thing in the earth in the midst of his tent. Joshua vii. 21. He hid it very closely. He did not content himself with hiding it in the most secret place in his tent, but he dug in the ground and buried it in the earth under his feet, that there might be no sign of it above ground. So are men's deceitful hearts wont to hide the accursed thing which troubles them. When they are put upon searching for the cause of their trouble and darkness, they think of one thing and another, but commonly overlook the chief cause of all their trouble. It does not so much as enter their minds. They search the tent, but that is not enough; they must search the very ground, or they will not find it out. When they tell of their darkness, and are put

upon searching to see whether some sinful way is not the cause, they readily own that it is their fault. But yet they mistake the true Achan, notwithstanding all they confess of the corruption of their hearts. It is not merely corruption in their hearts, working in their thoughts, which is the cause; but it is some way of outward sin and wickedness, in which they have of late in a great measure allowed themselves. That is the principal cause of their trouble; some way of pride, or covetousness, or some way of envy, or evil speaking, or ill will to their neighbours, or self-will, or some other way of unsuitable carriage, which is the chief cause of their darkness. In some respects, it is a great deal easier to find out little sins than greater sins, which causes many to strain at a gnat, who swallow a camel. Sins which are common to all, and of which all complain, such as corrupt workings of heart, they are willing to feel that it is no disgrace to have them. And the godly commonly tell of such things, and it does not affright them to see them. But such things as malice, a proud behaviour, and many other things which might be mentioned, are disagreeable. They are not willing to see such things in themselves. They therefore call them by good names, and put good constructions on them, and hide them, as Achan did his accursed thing under ground. The sin which troubles them most, has greatest possession of their hearts, and does most blind and prejudice their minds, is passed over. They can soon enough discover and see such things in others, in one of an opposite party, or the like, but they cannot see them in themselves; and so they continue still under darkness. It is an exceedingly difficult thing to find out the troubler. You have need, therefore, to be exceedingly thorough in searching for this matter, and not to spare yourself, or bribe your conscience at all, but labour to be impartial in the search. And to induce you to this, consider what God said to Joshua. Joshua vii. 12. "Neither will I be with you any more, unless you destroy the accursed thing from among you." And, therefore,

4. When you have found out the troubler, be sure thoroughly to destroy it. Renounce it with detestation, as a vile serpent that has secretly lain under your head for a long time, and infected you with his poisons time after time, and bit you, when you were asleep, made you sick and filled you with pain, and you knew it not. Would not a man, when he has found out the serpent in such a case, destroy it with indignation, and be for ever afterwards thoroughly watchful that he is not caught with such a calamity again? You cannot be too thorough in destroying such an enemy, and labouring to root it out, and extirpate all its race. Whoever of you are under darkness and trouble, I am bold to say, if God help you to follow these directions, your darkness will soon

be scattered, and hope and comfort will arise. And this is the surest, and readiest, and most direct course which any of you can take in order to the renewing of comfort in your soul. And without this, do not promise yourself any considerable degree of light or comfort while you live, however many examinations of past experiences and prayers to God for light you may make.

SERMON IV.

ROMANS ix. 18.

Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.

THE apostle, in the beginning of this chapter, expresses his great concern and sorrow of heart for the nation of the Jews, who were rejected of God. This leads him to observe the difference which God made by election between some of the Jews and others, and between the bulk of that people and the Christian Gentiles. In speaking of this he enters into a more minute discussion of the sovereignty of God in electing some to eternal life, and rejecting others, than is found in any other part of the Bible; in the course of which he quotes several passages from the Old Testament, confirming and illustrating this doctrine. In the ninth verse he refers us to what God said to Abraham, showing his election of Isaac before Ishmael—"For this is the word of promise; at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son:" then to what God had said to Rebecca, showing his election of Jacob before Esau; "The elder shall serve the younger:" in the thirteenth verse, to a passage from Malachi, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated:" in the fifteenth verse, to what God said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion, on whom I will have compassion:" and the verse preceding the text, to what God says to Pharaoh, "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." In what the apostle says in the text, he seems to have respect especially to the two last cited passages: to what God said to Moses in the fifteenth verse, and to what he said to Pharaoh in the verse immediately preceding. God said to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." To this the apostle refers in the former part of the text. And we know how often it is said of Pharaoh, that God hardened his heart. And to this the apostle seems to have respect in the latter part of the text; "and whom he will he hardeneth." We may observe in the text,

1. God's different dealing with men. He hath mercy on some, and hardeneth others. When God is here spoken of as hardening some of the children of men, it is not to be understood that God by any positive efficiency hardens any man's heart. There is no positive act in God, as though he put forth any power to harden the heart. To suppose any such thing would be to make God the immediate author of sin. God is said to harden men in two ways, by withholding the powerful influences of his Spirit, without which their hearts will remain hardened, and grow harder and harder; in this sense he hardens them, as he leaves them to hardness. And again, by ordering those things in his providence which, through the abuse of their corruption, become the occasion of their hardening. Thus God sends his word and ordinances to men which, by their abuse, prove an occasion of their hardening. So the apostle said, that he was unto some "a savour of death unto death." So God is represented as sending Isaiah on this errand, to make the hearts of the people fat, and to make their ears heavy, and to shut their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Isaiah vi. 10. Isaiah's preaching was, in itself, of a contrary tendency, to make them better. But their abuse of it rendered it an occasion of their hardening. As God is here said to harden men, so he is said to put a lying spirit in the mouth of the false prophets. 2 Chronicles xviii. 22: That is, he suffered a lying spirit to enter into them. And thus he is said to have bid Shimei curse David. 2 Samuel xvi. 10. Not that he properly commanded him; for it is contrary to God's commands. God expressly forbids cursing the ruler of the people. Exodus xxii. 28. But he suffered corruption at that time so to work in Shimei, and ordered that occasion of stirring it up, as a manifestation of his displeasure against David.

2. The foundation of his different dealing with mankind; viz. his sovereign will and pleasure. "He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth." This does not imply, merely, that God never shows mercy or denies it, against his will, or that he is always willing to do it, when he does it. A willing subject or servant, when he obeys his Lord's commands, may never do any thing against his will, nothing, but what he can do cheerfully and with delight; and yet he cannot be said to do what he wills in the sense of the text. But the expression implies that it is God's mere will and sovereign pleasure, which supremely orders this affair. It is the divine will without restraint, or constraint, or obligation.

Doctrine. God exercises his sovereignty in the eternal salvation of men.

He not only is sovereign, and has a sovereign right to dispose and order in that affair; and he not only might proceed in a sovereign way, if he would, and nobody could charge him with exceeding his right; but he actually does so; he exercises the right which he has. In the following discourse, I propose to show,

I. What is God's sovereignty.

II. What God's sovereignty in the salvation of men implies.

III. That God actually doth exercise his sovereignty in this matter.

IV. The reasons for this exercise.

I. I would show what is God's sovereignty.

The sovereignty of God is his absolute, independent right of disposing of all creatures according to his own pleasure. I will consider this definition by the parts of it.

The Will of God is called his mere pleasure,

1. In opposition to any constraint. Men may do things voluntarily, and yet there may be a degree of constraint. A man may be said to do a thing voluntarily, that is, he himself does it; and, all things considered, he may choose to do it: yet he may do it out of fear, and the thing in itself considered be irksome to him, and sorely against his inclination. When men do things thus, they cannot be said to do them according to their mere pleasure.

2. In opposition to its being under the will of another. A servant may fulfil his master's commands, and may do it willingly, and cheerfully, and may delight to do his master's will; yet when he does so, he does not do it of his own mere pleasure. The saints do the will of God freely. They choose to do it; it is their meat and drink. Yet they do not do it of their mere pleasure and arbitrary will; because their will is under the direction of a superior will.

3. In opposition to any proper obligation. A man may do a thing, which he is obliged to do, very freely; but he cannot be said to act from his own mere will and pleasure. He, who acts from his own mere pleasure, is at full liberty: but he, who is under any proper obligation, is not at liberty, but is bound. Now the sovereignty of God supposes, that he has a right to dispose of all his creatures according to his mere pleasure in the sense explained. And his right is absolute and independent. Men may have a right to dispose of some things according to their pleasure. But their right is not absolute and unlimited. Men may be said to have a right to dispose of their own goods as they please. But their right is not absolute; it has limits and bounds. They have a right to dispose of their own goods as they please, provided they do not do it contrary to the law of the state to which they are subject, or contrary to the law of God. Men's right to dispose of their things as they will, is not absolute, because it is not in-

dependent. They have not an independent right to what they have, but in some things depend on the community to which they belong, for the right they have; and in every thing depend on God. They receive all the right they have to any thing from God. But the sovereignty of God imports that he has an absolute and unlimited and independent right of disposing of his creatures as he will. I proposed to inquire,

II. What God's sovereignty in the salvation of men implies. In answer to this inquiry, I observe, it implies that God can either bestow salvation on any of the children of men, or refuse it, without any prejudice to the glory of any of his attributes, except where he has been pleased to declare, that he will, or will not bestow it. It cannot be said absolutely, as the case now stands, that God can, without any prejudice to the honour of any of his attributes, bestow salvation on any of the children of men, or refuse it; because, concerning some, God has been pleased to declare either that he will or that he will not bestow salvation on them; and thus to bind himself by his own promise. And concerning some he has been pleased to declare, that he never will bestow salvation upon them; viz. those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. Hence, as the case now stands, he is obliged; he cannot bestow salvation in one case, or refuse it in the other, without prejudice to the honour of his truth. But God exercised his sovereignty in making these declarations. God was not obliged to promise that he would save all, who believe in Christ; nor was he obliged to declare, that he who committed the sin against the Holy Ghost should never be forgiven. But it pleased him so to declare. And had it not been so that God had been pleased to oblige himself in these cases, he might still have either bestowed salvation, or refused it, without prejudice to any of his attributes. If it would in itself be prejudicial to any of his attributes to bestow or refuse salvation, then God would not in that matter act as absolutely sovereign. Because it then ceases to be a merely arbitrary thing. It ceases to be a matter of absolute liberty, and is become a matter of necessity or obligation. For God cannot do any thing to the prejudice of any of his attributes, or contrary to what is in itself excellent and glorious. Therefore,

1. God can, without prejudice to the glory of any of his attributes, bestow salvation on any of the children of men, except on those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. The case was thus when man fell, and before God revealed his eternal purpose and plan for redeeming men by Jesus Christ. It was probably looked upon by the angels as a thing utterly inconsistent with God's attributes to save any of the children of men. It was utterly inconsistent with the honour of the divine attributes to save any one of the fallen children of men, as they were in themselves.

It could not have been done had not God contrived a way consistent with the honour of his holiness, majesty, justice, and truth. But since God in the gospel has revealed that nothing is too hard for him to do, nothing beyond the reach of his power and wisdom, and sufficiency; and since Christ has wrought out the work of redemption, and fulfilled the law by obeying, there is none of mankind whom he may not save without any prejudice to any of his attributes, excepting those who have committed the sin against the Holy Ghost. And those he might have saved without going contrary to any of his attributes, had he not been pleased to declare that he would not. It was not because he could not have saved them consistently with his justice, and consistently with his law, or because his attribute of mercy was not great enough, or the blood of Christ not sufficient to cleanse from that sin. But it has pleased him for wise reasons to declare that that sin shall never be forgiven in this world, or in the world to come. And so now it is contrary to God's truth to save such. But otherwise there is no sinner, let him be ever so great, but God can save him without prejudice to any attribute, if he has been a murderer, adulterer, or perjurer, or idolater, or blasphemer, God may save him if he pleases, and in no respect injure his glory. Though persons have sinned long, have been obstinate, have committed heinous sins a thousand times, even till they have grown old in sin, and have sinned under great aggravations: let the aggravations be what they may, if they have sinned under ever so great light; if they have been backsliders, and have sinned against ever so numerous and solemn warnings and strivings of the Spirit, and mercies of his common providence. Though the danger of such is much greater than of other sinners, yet God can save them if he pleases, for the sake of Christ, without any prejudice to any of his attributes. He may have mercy on whom he will have mercy. He may have mercy on the greatest of sinners, if he pleases, and the glory of none of his attributes will be in the least sullied. Such is the sufficiency of the satisfaction and righteousness of Christ, that none of the divine attributes stand in the way of the salvation of any of them. Thus the glory of any attribute did not at all suffer by Christ's saving some of his crucifiers.

1. God may save any of them without prejudice to the honour of his holiness. God is an infinitely holy Being. The heavens are not pure in his sight. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on iniquity. And if God should in any way countenance sin, and should not give proper testimonies of his hatred of it, and displeasure at it, it would be a prejudice to the honour of his holiness. But God can save the greatest sinner without giving the least countenance to sin. If he saves one, who for a long time has stood out under the calls of the gospel, and

has sinned under dreadful aggravations; if he saves one who, against light has been a pirate or blasphemer, he may do it without giving any countenance to their wickedness; because his abhorrence of it and displeasure against it have been already sufficiently manifested in the sufferings of Christ. It was a sufficient testimony of God's abhorrence against even the greatest wickedness, that Christ, the eternal Son of God, died for it. Nothing can show God's infinite abhorrence of any wickedness more than this. If the wicked man himself should be thrust into hell, and should endure the most extreme torments, which are ever suffered there, it would not be a greater manifestation of God's abhorrence of it, than the sufferings of the Son of God for it.

2. God may save any of the children of men without prejudice to the honour of his majesty. If men have affronted God, and that ever so much, if they have cast ever so much contempt on his authority; yet God can save them, if he pleases, and the honour of his majesty not suffer in the least. If God should save those who have affronted him, without satisfaction, the honour of his majesty would suffer. For when contempt is cast upon infinite majesty, its honour suffers and the contempt leaves an obscurity upon the honour of the divine majesty, if the injury is not repaired. But the sufferings of Christ do fully repair the injury. Let the contempt be ever so great, yet if so honourable a person as Christ undertakes to be a Mediator for the offender, and in the mediation suffer in his stead, it fully repairs the injury done to the majesty of heaven by the greatest sinner.

3. God may save any sinner whatsoever consistently with his justice. The justice of God requires the punishment of sin. God is the supreme Judge of the world, and he is to judge the world according to the rules of justice. It is not the part of a judge to show favour to the person judged; but he is to determine according to a rule of justice without departing to the right hand or left. God does not show mercy as a Judge, but as a Sovereign. And therefore when mercy sought the salvation of sinners, the inquiry was how to make the exercise of the mercy of God as a sovereign, and of his strict justice as a judge, agree together. And this is done by the sufferings of Christ, in which sin is punished fully, and justice answered. Christ suffered enough for the punishment of the sins of the greatest sinner that ever lived. So that God, when he judges, may act according to a rule of strict justice, and yet acquit the sinner, if he be in Christ. Justice cannot require any more for any man's sins, than those sufferings of one of the persons in the Trinity, which Christ suffered. Romans iii. 25, 26, "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood; to declare his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Christ."

4. God can save any sinner whatsoever, without any prejudice to the honour of his truth. God passed his word, that sin should be punished with death, which is to be understood not only of the first, but of the second death. God can save the greatest sinner consistently with his truth in this threatening. For sin is punished in the sufferings of Christ, inasmuch as he is our surety, and so is legally the same person, and sustained our guilt, and in his sufferings bore our punishment. It may be objected, that God said, if thou eatest, thou shalt die; as though the same person that sinned must suffer; and therefore why does not God's truth oblige him to that? I answer, that the word then was not intended to be restrained to him, that in his own person sinned. Adam probably understood that his posterity were included, whether they sinned in their own person or not. If they sinned in Adam, their surety, those words, "if thou eatest," meant, if thou eatest in thyself, or in thy surety. And therefore, the latter words, "thou shalt die," do also fairly allow of such a construction as, thou shalt die in thyself, or in thy surety. Isaiah xlii. 21. "The Lord is well pleased for his righteousness' sake, he will magnify the law and make it honourable." But,

II. God may refuse salvation to any sinner whatsoever, without prejudice to the honour of any of his attributes.

There is no person whatever in a natural condition, upon whom God may not refuse to bestow salvation without prejudice to any part of his glory. Let a natural person be wise, or unwise, of a good or ill natural temper, of mean or honourable parentage, whether born of wicked or godly parents; let him be a moral or immoral person, whatever good he may have done, however religious he has been, how many prayers soever he has made, and whatever pains he has taken that he may be saved; whatever concern and distress he may have for fear he shall be damned; or whatever circumstances he may be in; God can deny him salvation without the least disparagement to any of his perfections. His glory will not in any instance be the least obscured by it.

1. God may deny salvation to any natural person without any injury to the honour of his righteousness. If he does so, there is no injustice nor unfairness in it. There is no natural man living, let his case be what it will, but God may deny him salvation, and cast him down to hell, and yet not be chargeable with the least unrighteous or unfair dealing in any respect whatsoever. This is evident, because they all have deserved hell: and it is no injustice for a proper judge to inflict on any man what he deserves. And as he has deserved condemnation, so he has never done any thing to remove the liability, or to

atone for the sin. He never has done any thing whereby he has laid any obligations on God not to punish him as he deserved.

2. God may deny salvation to any unconverted person whatever without any prejudice to the honour of his goodness. Sinners are sometimes ready to flatter themselves, that though it may not be contrary to the justice of God to condemn them, yet it will not consist with the glory of his mercy. They think it will be dishonourable to God's mercy to cast them into hell, and have no pity or compassion upon them. They think it will be very hard and severe, and not becoming a God of infinite grace and tender compassion. But God can deny salvation to any natural person without any disparagement to his mercy and goodness. That, which is not contrary to God's justice, is not contrary to his mercy. If damnation be justice, then mercy may choose its own object. They mistake the nature of the mercy of God, who think that it is an attribute, which, in some cases, is contrary to justice. Nay, God's mercy is illustrated by it, as in the twenty-third verse of the context. "That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

3. It is in no way prejudicial to the honour of God's faithfulness. For God has in no way obliged himself to any natural man by his word to bestow salvation upon him. Men in a natural condition are not the children of promise; but lie open to the curse of the law, which would not be the case if they had any promise to lay hold of.

III. God does actually exercise his sovereignty in men's salvation.

We shall show how he exercises this right in several particulars.

1. In calling one people or nation, and giving them the means of grace, and leaving others without them. According to the divine appointment, salvation is bestowed in connexion with the means of grace. God may sometimes make use of very unlikely means, and bestow salvation on men, who are under very great disadvantages; but he does not bestow grace wholly without any means. But God exercises his sovereignty in bestowing those means. All mankind are by nature in like circumstances towards God. Yet God greatly distinguishes some from others by the means and advantages, which he bestows upon them. The savages, who live in the remote parts of this continent, and are under the grossest heathenish darkness, as well as the inhabitants of Africa, are naturally in exactly similar circumstances towards God with us in this land. They are no more alienated or estranged from God in their natures than

we; and God has no more to charge them with. And yet what a vast difference has God made between us and them! In this he has exercised his sovereignty. He did this of old, when he chose but one people, to make them his covenant people, and to give them the means of grace, and left all others, and gave them over to heathenish darkness and the tyranny of the devil, to perish from generation to generation for many hundreds of years. The earth in that time was peopled with many great and mighty nations. There were the Egyptians, a people famed for their wisdom. There were also the Assyrians and Chaldeans, who were great, and wise, and powerful nations. There were the Persians, who by their strength and policy subdued a great part of the world. There were the renowned nations of the Greeks and Romans, who were famed over the whole world for their excellent civil governments, for their wisdom and skill in the arts of peace and war, and who by their military prowess in their turns subdued and reigned over the world. Those were rejected. God did not choose them for his people, but left them for many ages under gross heathenish darkness, to perish for lack of vision; and chose one only people, the posterity of Jacob, to be his own people, and to give them the means of grace. Psalms cxlvii. 19, 20. "He showeth his word unto Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel. He hath not dealt so with any nation; and as for his judgments, they have not known them." This nation were a small, inconsiderable people in comparison with many other people. Deuteronomy vii. 7. "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people." So neither was it for their righteousness; for they had no more of that, than other people. Deuteronomy ix. 6. "Understand therefore, that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it for thy righteousness; for thou art a stiff-necked people." God gives them to understand, that it was from no other cause but his free electing love, that he chose them to be his people. That reason is given why God loved them; it was because he loved them. Deuteronomy vii. 8. Which is as much as to say, it was agreeable to his sovereign pleasure, to set his love upon you.

God also showed his sovereignty in choosing that people, when other nations were rejected, who came of the same progenitors. Thus the children of Isaac were chosen, when the posterity of Ishmael and other sons of Abraham were rejected. So the children of Jacob were chosen, when the posterity of Esau were rejected: as the apostle observes in the seventh verse, "Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are

they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called:" and again in verses 10, 11, 12, 13, "And not only this; but when Rebekah also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac; the children moreover being not yet born, neither having done any good, or evil, that the promise of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." The apostle has not respect merely to the election of the persons of Isaac and Jacob before Ishmael and Esau; but of their posterity. In the passage, already quoted from Malachi, God has respect to the nations, which were the posterity of Esau and Jacob; Malachi i. 2, 3, "I have loved you, saith the Lord. Yet ye say, wherein hast thou loved us? Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord; yet I loved Jacob; and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness." God showed his sovereignty, when Christ came, in rejecting the Jews, and calling the Gentiles. God rejected that nation who were the children of Abraham according to the flesh, and had been his peculiar people for so many ages, and who alone possessed the one true God, and chose idolatrous heathen before them, and called them to be his people. When the Messiah came, who was born of their nation, and whom they so much expected, he rejected them. He came to his own, and his own received him not. John i. 11. When the glorious dispensation of the gospel came, God passed by the Jews, and called those, who had been heathens, to enjoy the privileges of it. They were broken off, that the Gentiles might be graffed on. Romans xi. 17. She is now called beloved, that was not beloved. And more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife. Isaiah liv. 1. The natural children of Abraham are rejected, and God raises up children to Abraham of stones. That nation, which was so honoured of God, have now been for many ages rejected, and remain dispersed all over the world, a remarkable monument of divine vengeance. And now God greatly distinguishes some Gentile nations from others, and all according to his sovereign pleasure.

2. God exercises his sovereignty in the advantages he bestows upon particular persons. All need salvation alike, and all are, naturally, alike undeserving of it; but he gives some vastly greater advantages for salvation, than others. To some he assigns their place in pious and religious families, where they may be well instructed and educated, and have religious parents to dedicate them to God, and put up many prayers for them. God places some under a more powerful ministry than others,

and in places where there are more of the out-pourings of the spirit of God. To some he gives much more of the strivings and the awakening influences of the spirit, than to others. It is according to his mere sovereign pleasure.

3. God exercises his sovereignty in sometimes bestowing salvation upon the low and mean, and denying it to the wise and great. Christ in his sovereignty passes by the gates of princes and nobles, and enters some cottage and dwells there, and has communion with its obscure inhabitants. God in his sovereignty withheld salvation from the rich man, who fared sumptuously every day, and bestowed it on poor Lazarus, who sat begging at his gate. God in this way pours contempt on princes, and on all their glittering splendour. So God sometimes passes by wise men, men of great understanding, learned and great scholars, and bestows salvation on others of weak understanding, who only comprehend some of the plainer parts of scripture, and the fundamental principles of the Christian religion. Yea, there seem to be fewer great men called, than others. And God in ordering it thus manifests his sovereignty. 1 Corinthians i. 26, 27, 28. "For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things, which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things, which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are."

4. In bestowing salvation on some, who have had few advantages. God sometimes will bless weak means for producing astonishing effects, when more excellent means are not succeeded. God sometimes will withhold salvation from those, who are the children of very pious parents, and bestow it on others, who have been born and brought up in wicked families. Thus we read of a good Abijah in the family of Jeroboam, and of a godly Hezekiah, the son of wicked Ahaz, and of a godly Josiah, the son of a wicked Amon. But on the contrary of a wicked Amnon, and Absalom, the sons of holy David, and that vile Manasseh, the son of good Hezekiah. Sometimes some, who have had eminent means of grace, are rejected, and left to perish, and others, under far less advantages, are saved. Thus the Scribes and Pharisees, who had so much light and knowledge of the scriptures, were mostly rejected, and the poor ignorant Publicans saved. The greater part of those, among whom Christ was much conversant, and who heard him preach, and saw him work miracles from day to day, were left; and the woman of Samaria was taken, and many other Samaritans at

the same time, who only heard Christ preach, as he occasionally passed through their city. So the woman of Canaan was taken, who was not of the country of the Jews, and but once saw Jesus Christ. So the Jews, who had seen and heard Christ, and saw his miracles, and with whom the apostles laboured so much, were not saved. But the Gentiles, many of them, who, as it were, but transiently heard the glad tidings of salvation, embraced them, and were converted.

5. God exercises his sovereignty in calling some to salvation, who have been very heinously wicked, and leaving others, who have been moral and religious persons. The Pharisees were a very strict sect among the Jews. Their religion was extraordinary. Luke xviii. 11. They were not as other men, extortioners, unjust, or adulterers. There was their morality. They fasted twice a week, and gave tithes of all that they possessed. There was their religion. But yet they were mostly rejected, and the Publicans, and harlots, and openly vicious sort of people entered into the kingdom of God before them. Matthew xxi. 31. The apostle describes his righteousness while a Pharisee. Philippians iii. 6. "Touching the righteousness, which is of the law, blameless." The rich young man, who came kneeling to Christ, saying, good Master, what shall I do, that I may have eternal life, was a moral person. When Christ bade him keep the commandments, he said, and in his own view with sincerity, "All these have I kept from my youth up." He had obviously been brought up in a good family, and was a youth of such amiable manners and correct deportment, that it is said, "Jesus beholding him, loved him." Still he was left; while the thief, that was crucified with Christ, was chosen and called, even on the cross. God sometimes shows his sovereignty by showing mercy to the chief of sinners, on those who have been murderers, and profaners, and blasphemers. And even when they are old, some are called at the eleventh hour. God sometimes shows the sovereignty of his grace by showing mercy to some, who have spent most of their lives in the service of Satan, and have little left to spend in the service of God.

6. In saving some of those who seek salvation, and not others. Some who seek salvation, as we know both from scripture and observation, are soon converted; while others seek a long time, and do not obtain at last. God helps some over the mountains and difficulties which are in the way; he subdues Satan, and delivers them from his temptations: but others are ruined by the temptations, with which they meet. Some are never thoroughly awakened; while to others God is pleased to give thorough convictions. Some are left to backsliding hearts;

others God causes to hold out to the end. Some are brought off from a confidence in their own righteousness; others never get over that obstruction in their way, as long as they live. And some are converted and saved, who never had so great strivings as some, who notwithstanding perish.

IV. I come now to give the reasons, why God does thus exercise his sovereignty in the eternal salvation of the children of men.

1. It is agreeable to God's design in the creation of the universe to exercise every attribute, and thus to manifest the glory of each of them. God's design in the creation was to glorify himself, or to make a discovery of the essential glory of his nature. It was fit that infinite glory should shine forth; and it was God's original design to make a manifestation of his glory, as it is. Not that it was his design to manifest all his glory to the apprehension of creatures; for it is impossible that the minds of creatures should comprehend it. But it was his design to make a true manifestation of his glory, such as should represent every attribute. If God glorified one attribute, and not another, such manifestation of his glory would be defective; and the representation would not be complete. If all God's attributes are not manifested, the glory of none of them is manifested as it is; for the divine attributes reflect glory on one another. Thus if God's wisdom be manifested, and not his holiness, the glory of his wisdom would not be manifested as it is; for one part of the glory of the attribute of divine wisdom is, that it is a holy wisdom. So if his holiness were manifested, and not his wisdom, the glory of his holiness would not be manifested as it is; for one thing which belongs to the glory of God's holiness is, that it is a wise holiness. So it is with respect to the attributes of mercy and justice. The glory of God's mercy does not appear as it is, unless it is manifested as a just mercy, or as a mercy consistent with justice. And so with respect to God's sovereignty, it reflects glory on all his other attributes. It is part of the glory of God's mercy, that it is sovereign mercy. So all the attributes of God reflect glory on one another. The glory of one attribute cannot be manifested, as it is, without the manifestation of another. One attribute is defective without another, and therefore the manifestation will be defective. Hence it was the will of God to manifest all his attributes. The declarative glory of God in scripture is often called God's *Name*, because it declares his nature. But if his name does not signify his nature as it is, or does not declare any attribute, it is not a true name. The sovereignty of God is one of his attributes and a part of his glory. The glory of God eminently appears in his absolute sovereignty over all

creatures great and small. If the glory of a prince be his power and dominion, then the glory of God is his absolute sovereignty. Herein appear God's infinite greatness and highness above all creatures. Therefore it is the will of God to manifest his sovereignty. And his sovereignty, like his other attributes, is manifested in the exercise of it. He glorifies his power in the exercise of power. He glorifies his mercy in the exercise of mercy. So he glorifies his sovereignty in the exercise of sovereignty.

2. The more excellent the creature is over whom God is sovereign, and the greater the matter in which he so appears, the more glorious is his sovereignty. The sovereignty of God in his being sovereign over men, is more glorious than in his being sovereign over the inferior creatures. And his sovereignty over angels is yet more glorious than his sovereignty over men. For the nobler the creature is, still the greater and higher doth God appear in his sovereignty over it. It is a greater honour to a man to have dominion over men, than over beasts; and a still greater honour to have dominion over princes, nobles, and kings, than over ordinary men. So the glory of God's sovereignty appears in that he is sovereign over the souls of men, who are so noble and excellent creatures. God therefore will exercise his sovereignty over them. And the further the dominion of any one extends over another, the greater will be the honour. If a man has dominion over another only in some instances, he is not therein so much exalted, as in having absolute dominion over his life, and fortune, and all he has. So God's sovereignty over men appears glorious that it extends to every thing which concerns them. He may dispose of them with respect to all that concerns them, according to his own pleasure. His sovereignty appears glorious, that it reaches their most important affairs, even the eternal state and condition of the souls of men. Herein it appears that the sovereignty of God is without bounds or limits, in that it reaches to an affair of such infinite importance. God, therefore, as it is his design to manifest his own glory, will and does exercise his sovereignty towards men, over their souls and bodies, even in this most important matter of their eternal salvation. He has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardens.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we learn how absolutely we are dependent on God in this great matter of the eternal salvation of our souls. We are dependent not only on his wisdom to contrive a way to accomplish it, and on his power to bring it to pass, but we are de-

pendent on his mere will and pleasure in the affair. We depend on the sovereign will of God for every thing belonging to it, from the foundation to the top stone. It was of the sovereign pleasure of God, that he contrived a way to save any of mankind, and gave us Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, to be our Redeemer. Why did he look on us, and send us a Saviour, and not the fallen angels? It was from the sovereign pleasure of God. It was of his sovereign pleasure what means to appoint. His giving us the bible, and the ordinances of religion, is of his sovereign grace. His giving those means to us rather than to others; his giving the awakening influences of his Spirit; and his bestowing his saving grace, are all of his sovereign pleasure. When he says, "Let there be light in the soul of such an one," it is a word of infinite power and sovereign grace.

2. Let us with the greatest humility adore the awful and absolute sovereignty of God. As we have just shown, it is an eminent attribute of the divine Being, that he is sovereign over such excellent beings as the souls of men, and that in every respect, even in that of their eternal salvation. The infinite greatness of God, and his exaltation above us, appears in nothing more, than in his sovereignty. It is spoken of in scripture as a great part of his glory. Deuteronomy xxxii. 39. "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me. I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal; neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand." Psalms cxv. 3. "Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased." Daniel iv. 34, 35. "Whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and he doeth according to his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou?" Our Lord Jesus Christ praised and glorified the Father for the exercise of his sovereignty in the salvation of men. Matthew xi. 25, 26. "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Let us therefore give God the glory of his sovereignty, as adoring him, whose sovereign will orders all things, beholding ourselves as nothing in comparison with him. Dominion and sovereignty require humble reverence and honour in the subject. The absolute, universal, and unlimited sovereignty of God requires, that we should adore him with all possible humility and reverence. It is impossible that we should go to excess in lowliness and reverence of that Being who may dispose of us to all eternity, as he pleases.

3. Those who are in a state of salvation are to attribute it to sovereign grace alone, and to give all the praise to him, who maketh them to differ from others. Godliness is no cause for glorying, except it be in God. 1 Corinthians i. 29, 30, 31. "That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. That, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Such are not, by any means, in any degree to attribute their godliness, their safe and happy state and condition, to any natural difference between them and other men, or to any strength or righteousness of their own. They have no reason to exalt themselves in the least degree; but God is the being whom they should exalt. They should exalt God the Father, who chose them in Christ, who set his love upon them, and gave them salvation, before they were born, and even before the world was. If they inquire, why God set his love on them, and chose them rather than others, if they think they can see any cause out of God, they are greatly mistaken. They should exalt God the Son, who bore their names on his heart, when he came into the world, and hung on the cross, and in whom alone they have righteousness and strength. They should exalt God the Holy Ghost, who of sovereign grace has called them out of darkness into marvellous light; who has by his own immediate and free operation, led them into an understanding of the evil and danger of sin, and brought them off from their own righteousness, and opened their eyes to discover the glory of God, and the wonderful riches of God in Jesus Christ, and has sanctified them, and made them new creatures. When they hear of the wickedness of others, or look upon vicious persons, they should think how wicked they once were, and how much they provoked God, and how they deserved for ever to be left by him to perish in sin, and that it is only sovereign grace which has made the difference. 1 Corinthians vi. 10. Many sorts of sinners are there enumerated; fornicators, idolators, adulterers, effeminate, abusers of themselves with mankind. And then in the eleventh verse, the apostle tells them, "Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The people of God have the greater cause of thankfulness, more reason to love God, who hath bestowed such great and unspeakable mercy upon them of his mere sovereign pleasure.

4. Hence we learn what cause we have to admire the grace of God, that he should condescend to become bound to us by

covenant; that he, who is naturally supreme in his dominion over us, who is our absolute Proprietor, and may do with us as he pleases, and is under no obligation to us; that he should, as it were, relinquish his absolute freedom, and should cease to be merely sovereign in his dispensations towards believers, when once they have believed in Christ, and should, for their more abundant consolation, become bound. So that they can challenge salvation of this Sovereign; they can demand it through Christ, as a debt. And it would be prejudicial to the glory of God's attributes, to deny it to them; it would be contrary to his justice and faithfulness. What wonderful condescension is it in such a Being thus to become bound to us, worms of the dust, for our consolation! He bound himself by his word, his promise. But he was not satisfied with that; but that we might have stronger consolation still, he hath bound himself by his oath. Hebrews vi. 13, &c. "For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself; saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men verily swear by the greater; and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us. Which hope we have as an anchor to the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."

Let us, therefore, labour to submit to the sovereignty of God. God insists, that his sovereignty be acknowledged by us, and that even in this great matter, a matter which so nearly and infinitely concerns us, as our own eternal salvation. This is the stumbling block on which thousands fall and perish; and if we go on contending with God about his sovereignty, it will be our eternal ruin. It is absolutely necessary that we should submit to God, as our absolute sovereign, and the sovereign over our souls; as one who may have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and harden whom he will.

5. And lastly. We may make use of this doctrine to guard those who seek salvation from two opposite extremes—presumption and discouragement. Do not presume upon the mercy of God, and so encourage yourself in sin. Many hear that God's mercy is infinite, and therefore think, that if they delay seeking salvation for the present, and seek it hereafter, that God will bestow his grace upon them. But consider, that though God's grace

is sufficient, yet he is sovereign, and will use his own pleasure whether he will save you or not. If you put off salvation till hereafter, salvation will not be in your power. It will be as a sovereign God pleases, whether you shall obtain it or not. Seeing, therefore, that in this affair you are so absolutely dependent on God, it is best to follow his direction in seeking it, which is to hear his voice to-day: "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." Beware also of discouragement. Take heed of despairing thoughts, because you are a great sinner, because you have persevered so long in sin, have backslidden, and resisted the Holy Ghost. Remember that, let your case be what it may, and you ever so great a sinner, if you have not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, God can bestow mercy upon you without the least prejudice to the honour of his holiness, which you have offended, or to the honour of his majesty, which you have insulted, or of his justice, which you have made your enemy, or of his truth, or of any of his attributes. Let you be what sinner you may, God can, if he pleases, greatly glorify himself in your salvation.

SERMON V.

FEB. 1740.

PHILIPPIANS iii. 17.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so, as ye have us for an ensample.

THE apostle in the foregoing part of the chapter, had been telling how he counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, and in the text he urges that his example should be followed.

He does this in two ways.

1. He exhorts the Philippian Christians to follow his example. "Brethren, be followers together of me." He exhorts them to be followers of him *together;* that is, that they should all follow his example with one heart and soul, all agreeing in it and that all, as much as in them lay, should help and assist each other in it.

2. That they should take particular notice of others, that did so, and put peculiar honour on them; which is implied in the expression in the latter part of the verse, "mark them, which walk so as ye have us for an ensample."

Doctrine. We ought to follow the good examples of the apostle Paul. We are to consider, that the apostle did not say this of himself from an ambitious spirit, from a desire of being set up as a pattern, and eyed and imitated as an example to other Christians. His writings are not of any private interpretation, but he spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost. The Holy Ghost directed that the good examples of the apostle Paul should be noticed by other Christians, and imitated. And we are also to consider, that this is not a command to the Philippians only, to whom the epistle was more immediately directed, but to all those, for whose use this epistle was written, for all Christians to the end of the world. For though God so ordered it, that the epistles of the apostles were mostly written on particular occasions and directed to particular churches, yet they were written to be of universal use. And those occasions were so ordered in the wisdom of divine providence that they are a part of that infallible rule of faith and manners,

which God has given to the Christian church to be their rule in all ages. And the precepts, that we find in those epistles are no more to be regarded as precepts intended only for those to whom the epistle was sent, than the ten commandments, that were spoken from Mount Sinai to the children of Israel, are to be regarded as commands intended only for that people. And when we are directed to follow the good examples of the apostle Paul by the Holy Ghost, it is not merely as we are to imitate whatever we see, that is good in any one, let him be who he may. But there are spiritual obligations, that lie on Christians to follow the good examples of this great apostle. And it hath pleased the Holy Ghost in an especial manner to set up the apostle Paul, not only as a teacher of the Christian church, but as a pattern to other Christians. The greatest example of all, that is set before us in the scripture to imitate, is the example of Jesus Christ, which he set us in his human nature, and when in his state of humiliation. This is presented to us not only as a great pattern, but as a perfect rule. And the example of no man is set forth, as our rule, but the example of Christ. We are commanded to follow the examples which God himself set us, or the acts of the divine nature. Ephesians v. 1. "Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children." And Matthew v. 48. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father, which is in heaven is perfect." But the example of Christ Jesus, when on earth, is more especially our pattern. For, though the acts of the divine nature have the highest possible perfection, and though his inimitable perfection is our best example, yet God is so much above us, his nature so infinitely different from ours, that it is not possible that his acts should be so accommodated to our nature and circumstances, as to be an example of so great and general use, as the perfect example in our nature which Christ has set us. Christ, though a divine person, was man, as we are men; and not only so, but he was, in many respects, a partaker of our circumstances. He dwelt among men. He depended on food and raiment, and such outward supports of life, as we do. He was subject to the changes of time, and the afflictions and calamities of this evil world, and to abuse from men's corruptions, and to temptations from Satan, as we are; was subject to the same law and rule that we are, used the same ordinances, and had many of our trials, and greater trials than we. So that Christ's example is the example, that is chiefly offered in scripture for our imitation. But yet the example of some that are fallen creatures, as we are, may in some respects be more accommodated to our circumstances, and more fitted for our instructions, than the example of Jesus Christ. For though he became man as we are, and was like us, and was in our circumstances in so many re-

spects, yet in other things there was a vast difference. He was the head of the church, and we are the members. He is Lord of all, we are his subjects and disciples. And we need an example, that shall teach and direct us how to behave towards Christ our Lord and head. And this we may have better in some, that have Christ for their Lord as well as we, than in Christ himself. But the greatest difference lies in this, that Christ had no sin, and we all are sinful creatures, all carry about with us a body of sin and death. It is said that Christ was made like to us in all things, sin only excepted. But this was excepted, and therefore there were many things required of us, of which Christ could not give us an example. Such as repentance for sin, brokenness of spirit for sin, mortification of lust, warring against sin. And the excellent example of some, that are naturally as sinful as we, has this advantage; that we may regard it as the example of those, who were naturally every way in our circumstances, and laboured under the same natural difficulties, and the same opposition of heart to that which is good, as ourselves; which tends to engage us to give more heed to their example, and the more to encourage and animate us to strive to follow it. And therefore we find that the scripture does not only recommend the example of Christ, but does also exhibit some mere men, that are of like passions with ourselves, as patterns for us to follow. So it exhibits the eminent saints of the old testament, of whom we read in the scripture, that they inherit the promises. Hebrews vi. 12. "That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises." In the eleventh chapter of Hebrews, a great number of eminent saints are mentioned as patterns for us to follow. Abraham is, in a particular manner, set forth as an example in his faith, and as the pattern of believers. Romans iv. 12. "And the father of circumcision to them, that are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised." And so the prophets of the old testament are also recommended as patterns. James v. 10. "Take my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience." And so eminently holy men under the new testament, apostles and others, that God sent forth to preach the gospel, are also examples for Christians to follow. Hebrews xiii. 7. "Remember them, that have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." But of all mere men, no one is so often particularly set forth in the scripture, as a pattern for Christians to follow, as the apostle Paul. Our observing his holy conversa-

tion as our example, is not only insisted on in the text, but also 1 Corinthians iv. 16. "Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." And xi. 1. "Be ye followers of me as I also am of Christ." And 1 Thessalonians, i. 6. Where the apostle commends the Christian Thessalonians for imitating his example; "and ye became followers of us." And 2 Thessalonians iii. 7, he insists on this as their duty. "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us."

For the more full treatment of this subject I shall,

I. Particularly mention many of the good examples of the apostle Paul, that we ought to imitate. Which I shall treat of not merely as a doctrine, but also in the way of application.

II. I shall show under what strict obligation we are to follow the good examples of this apostle.

I. I shall particularly mention many of those good examples of the apostle Paul, that we ought to imitate. And that I may be more distinct, I shall,

1. Mention those things, that respect his watchfulness for the good of his own soul.

2. Those virtues in him, that more immediately respected God and Christ.

3. Those that more immediately respect men.

4. Those, that were exercised in his behaviour, both towards God and men.

1. We ought to follow the good example, that the apostle Paul has set us in his seeking the good of his own soul.

First. We should follow him in his earnestness in seeking his own salvation. He was not careless and indifferent in this matter; but the kingdom of heaven suffered violence from him. He did not halt between two opinions, or seek with a wavering, unsteady mind, but with the most full determination and strong resolution. He resolved, if it could by any means be possible, that he would attain to the resurrection of the dead. He does not say that he was determined to attain it, if he could, by means that were not very costly or difficult, or by labouring for it a little time, or only now and then, or without any great degree of suffering, or without great loss in his temporal interest. But if by *any* means he could do it, he would, let the means be easy or difficult. Let it be a short labour and trial, or a long one; let the cross be light or heavy; it was all one to his resolution. Let the requisite means be what they would, if it were possible, he would obtain it. He did not hesitate at worldly losses, for he tells us that he readily suffered the loss of all things, that he might win Christ, and be found in him, and in his righteousness. Philippians iii. 8, 9. It was not with him as it was with the young man, that came kneeling to Christ to inquire of him what he should do

to inherit eternal life, and when Christ said, Go and sell all that thou hast and give to the poor, he went away sorrowful. He was not willing to part with all. If Christ had bid him sell half, it may be he would have complied with it. He had a great desire to secure salvation. But the apostle Paul did not content himself with wishing. He was resolved, if it were possible, that he would obtain it. And when it was needful that he should lose worldly good, or when any great suffering was in his way, it was no cause of hesitation to him. He had been in very comfortable and honourable circumstances among the Jews. He had received the best education, that was to be had among them, being brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, and was regarded as a very learned young man. His own nation, the Jews, had a high esteem of him, and he was esteemed for his moral and religious qualifications among them. But when he could not hold the outward benefit of these things and win Christ, he despised them totally, he parted with all his credit and honour. He made nothing of them, that he might win Christ. And instead of being honoured and loved and living in credit, as before among his own nation, he made himself the object of their universal hatred. He lost all, and the Jews hated him, and persecuted him every where. And when great sufferings were in the way, he willingly made himself conformable to Christ's death, that he might have a part in his resurrection. He parted with his honour, his ease, his former friends and former acquaintance, his worldly goods and every thing else, and plunged himself into a state of extreme labour, contempt and suffering; and in this way he sought the kingdom of heaven. He acted in this matter very much as one, that is running a race for some great prize, who makes running his great and only business, till he has reached the end of the race and strains every nerve and sinew, and suffers nothing to divert him, and will not stand to listen to what any one says to him, but presses forward. Or as a man that is engaged in battle, sword in hand, with strong and violent enemies, that seek his life, who exerts himself to his utmost, as for his life. 1 Corinthians ix. 26. "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." When fleshly appetites stood in the way, however importunate they were, he utterly denied them and renounced them; they were no impediment in the way of his thorough pursuit of salvation. He would not be subject to the appetites of his body, but made them subject to his soul. 1 Corinthians ix. 27. "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection." Probably there never was a soldier, when he bore his part in storming a city, that acted with greater resolution and violence, as it were forcing his way through all that opposed him, than the apostle Paul in seeking the kingdom of heaven. We have not only his

own word for it; the history we have of his life, written by Saint Luke, shows the same. Now those, who seek their salvation, ought to follow this example. Persons, who are concerned for their salvation, sometimes inquire what they shall do. Let them do as did the apostle Paul; seek salvation in the way he did, with the like violence and resolution. Those, that make this inquiry, who are somewhat anxious year after year, and complain that they have not obtained any comfort, would do well to ask themselves, whether they seek salvation in any measure in this way, with that resolution and violence of which he set them an example. Alas, are they not very far indeed from it! Can it in any proper sense be said, that the kingdom of heaven suffers violence at their hands?

Secondly. The apostle did not only thus earnestly seek salvation before his conversion and hope, but afterwards also. What he says in the third chapter of Philippians of his suffering the loss of all things, that he might be found in Christ, and its being the one thing that he did to seek salvation; and also what he says of his so running as not in vain, but as resolving to win the prize of salvation, and keeping under his body that he might not be a castaway; were long after his conviction, and after he had renounced all hope of his own good estate by nature. If being a convinced sinner excuses a man from seeking salvation any more, or makes it reasonable that he should cease his earnest care and labour for it, certainly the apostle might have been excused, when he had not only already attained true grace, but such eminent degrees of it. To see one of the most eminent saints that ever lived, if not the most eminent of all, so exceedingly engaged in seeking his own salvation, ought for ever to put to shame those who are a thousand degrees below him, and are but mere infants to him, if they have any grace at all; who yet excuse themselves from using any violence after the kingdom of heaven now, because they have attained already, who free themselves from the burden of going on earnestly to seek salvation with this, that they have finished the work, they have obtained a hope. The apostle, as eminent as he was, did not say within himself, "I am converted, and so am sure of salvation. Christ has promised it me; why need I labour any more to secure it? Yea, I am not only converted, but I have obtained great degrees of grace." But still he is violent after salvation. He did not keep looking back on the extraordinary discoveries he enjoyed at his first conversion, and the past great experience he had had from time to time. He did not content himself with the thought, that he possessed the most wonderful testimonies of God's favour, and of the love of Christ already that ever any enjoyed, even to his having been caught up to the third heavens; but he forgot the things that were behind. He acted

as though he did not consider that he had yet attained an interest in Christ. Philippians iii. 11, 12, 13, 14. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect; but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended; but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth to those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The apostle still sought that he might win Christ and his righteousness, and attain to his resurrection, not as though he had attained it already, or had already obtained a title to the crown. And this is especially the thing in which he calls on us to imitate his example in the text. It was not because Paul was at a loss whether he was truly converted or not, that he was still so earnest in seeking salvation. He not only thought that he was converted, and should go to heaven when he died, but he knew and spake particularly about it in this very epistle, in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter. "For me to live is Christ, but to die is gain." And in the foregoing verse he says, "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." The apostle knew that though he was converted, yet there remained a great work that he must do, in order to his salvation. There was a narrow way to eternal glory, through which he must pass, and never could come to heaven in any other way. He knew it was absolutely necessary for him earnestly to seek salvation still; he knew there was no going to heaven in a slothful way. And therefore he did not seek salvation the less earnestly, for his having hope and assurance, but a great deal more. We nowhere read so much of his earnestness and violence for the kingdom of heaven before he was converted, as afterwards. The apostle's hope was not of a nature to make him slothful; it had a contrary effect. The assurance he had of victory, together with the necessity there was of fighting, engaged him to fight, not as one that beat the air, but as one that wrestled with principalities and powers. Now this example the apostle does especially insist in the text, that we ought to follow. And this should induce all present who think themselves converted, to inquire whether they seek salvation never the less earnestly, because they think it is well with them, and that they are now sure of heaven. Most certainly if the apostle was in the right way of acting, we in this place are generally in the wrong. For nothing is more apparent than that it is not thus with the generality of professors here, but that it is a

common thing after they think they are safe, to be far less diligent and earnest in religion than before.

Thirdly. The apostle did not only diligently seek heaven after he knew he was converted, but was earnestly cautious lest he should be damned; as appears by the passage already cited. "But I keep under my body and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." Here you see the apostle is very careful lest he should be a castaway, and denies his carnal appetites, and mortifies his flesh for that reason. He did not say, "I am safe, I am sure I shall never be lost; why need I take any further care respecting it?" Many think because they suppose themselves converted, and so safe, that they have nothing to do with the awful threatenings of God's word, and those terrible denunciations of damnation that are contained in it. When they hear them, they hear them as things which belong only to others, and not at all to themselves, as though there were no application of what is revealed in the scripture respecting hell, to the godly. And therefore, when they hear awakening sermons about the awful things that God has threatened to the wicked, they do not hear them for themselves, but only for others. But it was not thus with this holy apostle, who certainly was as safe from hell, and as far from a damnable state as any of us. He looked upon himself as still nearly concerned in God's threatenings of eternal damnation, notwithstanding all his hope, and all his eminent holiness, and therefore gave great diligence, that he might avoid eternal damnation. For he considered that eternal misery was as certainly connected with a wicked life as ever it was, and that it was absolutely necessary that he should still keep under his body, and bring it into subjection, in order that he might not be damned; because indulging the lusts of the body and being damned were most surely connected together. The apostle knew that this conditional proposition was as true concerning him, as ever it was. "If I live wickedly, or do not live in a way of universal obedience to God's commands, I shall certainly be a castaway." This is evident, because the apostle mentions a proposition of this nature concerning himself in that very chapter where he says, he kept under his body lest he should be a castaway. 1 Corinthians ix. 16. "For though I preach the gospel I have nothing to glory of, for necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me if I preach not the gospel." What necessity was there upon the apostle to preach the gospel, though God had commanded him, for he was already converted, and was safe; and if he had neglected to preach the gospel, how could he have perished after he was converted? But yet this conditional proposition was still true; if he did not live a life of obedience to God, wo would be to him; wo

to him, if he did not preach the gospel. The connexion still held. It is impossible a man should go any where else than to hell in a way of disobedience to God. And therefore he deemed it necessary for him to preach the gospel on that account, and on the same account he deemed it necessary to keep under his body, lest he should be a castaway. The connexion between a wicked life and damnation is so certain, that if a man lives a wicked life, it proves that all his supposed experiences are nothing. If a man at the last day be found a worker of iniquity, nothing else will be inquired of about him. Let him pretend what he will, Christ will say to him and all others like him, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity." And God has revealed these threatenings and this connexion, not only to deter wicked men, but also godly men from sin. And though God will keep men that are converted from damnation, yet this is the means by which he will keep them from it; viz. he will keep them from a wicked life. And though he will keep them from a wicked life, yet this is one means by which he will keep them from it, viz. by their own caution to avoid damnation, and by his threatenings of damnation if they should live a wicked life. We have another remarkable instance in Job, who was an eminently holy man, yet avoided sin with the utmost care, because he would avoid destruction from God. Job, ch. xxxi. Surely we have as much cause to be cautious, that we do not expose ourselves to destruction from God, as holy Job had. We have not a greater stock of goodness than he. The apostle directs Christians to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Philippians ii. 12. And it is spoken of as the character of a true saint, that he trembles at God's word; Isaiah lxvi. 2, which is to tremble especially at the awful threatenings of it as Job did. Whereas the manner of many now is, whenever they think they are converted, to throw by those threatenings of God's word, as if they had no more to do with them, because they suppose they are converted, and out of danger. Christ gave his disciples, even those of them, that were converted, as well as others, directions to strive for salvation; because broad was the way that leads to destruction, and men are so apt to walk in that way and be damned. Matthew vii. 13, 14. "Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be, that find it."

Fourthly. The apostle did not seek salvation by his own righteousness. Though his sufferings were so very great, his labours so exceedingly abundant, yet he never accounted them as righteousness. He trod it under his feet, as utterly insufficient to recommend

him to God. He gave diligence that he might be found in Christ, not having on his own righteousness, which is of God, through faith, as in the foregoing part of the chapter from which the text is taken, beginning with the fourth verse. "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more; circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness, which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith. That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death, if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

Fifthly. In those earnest labours which he performed, he had respect to the recompense of the reward. He did it for an incorruptible crown. 1 Corinthians ix. 25. He sought a high degree of glory, for he knew the more he laboured, the more he should be rewarded, as appears from what he tells the Corinthians. He that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap also bountifully." And 1 Corinthians iii. 8. "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour." That he had respect to that crown of glory, which his Master had promised, in those great labours and sufferings, is evident from what he says to Timothy, a little before his death, 2 Timothy iv. 7, 8. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." All Christians should follow his example in this also; they should not content themselves with the thought, that they have goodness enough to carry them to heaven, but should earnestly seek high degrees of glory; for the higher degrees of glory are promised to extraordinary labours for God, for no other reason, but that we should seek them.

2. I proceed to mention some of the virtues of Paul, that more immediately respect God and Christ, in which we ought to follow his example.

First. He was strong in faith. It may be truly said of him that he lived by faith. His faith seemed to be even without the least appearance of diffidence or doubt in his words or actions, but all seemed to proclaim, that he had God and Christ and the invisible world continually in view. Such a faith, that was in continual exercise in him, he professes, in 2 Corinthians v. 6, 7, 8. "Therefore we are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. For we walk by faith, not by sight; we are confident I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." He always speaks of God and Christ and things invisible and future, as if he certainly knew them, and then saw them as fully and certainly, as we see any thing that is immediately before our bodily eyes. He spoke as though he certainly knew, that God's promise of eternal life should be accomplished, and gives this as the reason why he laboured so abundantly, and endured all manner of temporal sufferings and death, and was always delivered unto death for Christ's sake. 2 Corinthians iv. 11, &c. "For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh." He speaks of his earnest expectation and hope of the fulfilment of God's promises. And a little before his death, when he was a prisoner, and when he knew that he was like to bear the trial of martyrdom, which is the greatest trial of faith, he expresses his faith in Christ in the strongest terms. 2 Timothy i. 12. "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." Such an example may well make us ashamed; for how weak and unsteady is the faith of most Christians! If now and then there seems to be a lively exercise of faith, giving the person at that time a firm persuasion and confidence; yet how short are such exercises, how soon do they vanish! How often is faith shaken with one temptation; how often are the exercises of it interrupted with doubting, and how much is exhibited of a diffident, vibrating spirit! How little does our faith accomplish in times of trial; how often and how easily is our confidence in God shaken and interrupted, and how frequently does unbelief prevail! This is much to the dishonour of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as well as very painful to us. What a happy and glorious lot it is to live such a life of faith, as Paul lived! How far did he soar on the wings of his strong faith above those little difficulties, that continually molest us, and are ready to overcome us! Seeing we have

such a blessed example set before us in the scriptures, let it prompt us earnestly to seek, that we may soar higher also.

Secondly. Another virtue in which we should follow his example, is his great love to Christ. The Corinthians, who saw how the apostle acted, how he laboured, and how he suffered, and could see no worldly motive, were astonished. They wondered what it was, that so wonderfully influenced and actuated the man. The apostle says, that he was a spectacle to the world. But this was the immediate principle, that moved him; his strong, his intense love to his glorious Lord and Master. This love constrained him, that he could do nothing else than strive and labour and seek for his salvation. This account he gives of it himself. 2 Corinthians v. 14. "The love of Christ constraineth us." He had such a delight in the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the knowledge and contemplation of him, that he tells us, he "counted all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus." He speaks in very positive terms. He does not say merely, that he hopes he loves Christ, so as to despise other things in comparison of the knowledge of him; but "yea, doubtless, I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord." And he assigns this reason why he even gloried in his sufferings for Christ's sake; because the love of God was shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost. Romans v. 5. This expression seems to imply that he sensibly felt that holy affection, sweetly and powerfully diffused in his soul, like some precious, fragrant ointment. And how does he triumph in his love to Christ in the midst of his sufferings! Romans viii. 35, 36, 37. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay in all these things, we are more than conquerors through him, that hath loved us." May not this make us ashamed of our cold, dead hearts, that we hear so often of Christ, and of his glorious excellencies and his wonderful love, with so little emotion, our hearts being very commonly frozen up like a clod of earth by worldly affections. And it may be that now and then with much difficulty we persuade ourselves to do a little, or expend a little for the advancement of Christ's kingdom; and then are ready to boast of it, that we have done so nobly. Such superior examples as we have are enough to make us for ever blush for our own attainments in the love of Christ, and rouse us earnestly to follow after those who have gone so far beyond us.

Thirdly. The apostle lived in a day when Christianity was greatly despised; yet he was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. Christians were every where despised by the great men of the world.

Almost all those that made any figure in the world, men in honourable stations, men of learning, and men of wealth, despised Christianity, and accounted it a mean, contemptible thing to be a Christian, a follower and worshipper of a poor, crucified man. To be a Christian was regarded as what ruined a man's reputation. Christians were every where looked upon as fools, and were derided and mocked. They were the meanest of mankind, the offscouring of the world. This was a great temptation to Christians to be ashamed of the gospel. And the apostle Paul was more especially in such circumstances, as exposed him to this temptation. For before he was a Christian, he was in great reputation among his own countrymen. He was esteemed a young man of more than ordinary proficiency in learning, and was a man of high distinction among the Pharisees, a class of men of the first standing among the Jews. In times when religion is much despised, great men are more ready to be ashamed of it than others. Many of the great seem to think, that to appear religious men would make them look little. They do not know how to comply with showing a devout spirit, a spirit of supreme love to God, and a strict regard to God's commands. But yet the apostle was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ any where, or before any person. He was not ashamed of it among his own countrymen, the Jews, before their rulers and scribes, and great men, but ever boldly professed it, and confronted them in their opposition. When he was at Athens, the chief seat of learning and of learned men in the world, though the learned men and philosophers there despised his doctrine, and called him a babbler for preaching the gospel; yet he felt no shame, but boldly disputed with and confounded those great philosophers, and converted some of them. And when he came to Rome, the metropolis and mistress of the world, where resided the Emperor, and Senators, and the chief rulers of the world, he was not ashamed of the gospel there. He tells the Romans; "I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are at Rome also. For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The apostle was greatly derided and despised for preaching a crucified Jesus. 1 Corinthians iv. 13. "We are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day." And in the tenth verse he says, "We are fools for Christ's sake." They were every where accounted and called fools. Yet the apostle was so far from being ashamed of the crucified Jesus, that he gloried in him above all things. Galatians vi. 14. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." Here is an example for us to follow, if at any time we fall in among those who hold religion in contempt, and will despise us for our pretensions to reli-

gion, and will be ready to deride us for being so precise, and look upon us as fools; that we may not be ashamed of religion, and yield to sinful compliances with vain and loose persons, lest we should appear singular, and be looked upon as ridiculous. Such a meanness of spirit possesses many persons, who are not worthy to be called Christians; and are such as Christ will be ashamed of when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

Fourthly. Another virtue in which we ought to follow the apostle, was his contempt of the world, and his heavenly-mindedness. He contemned all the vain enjoyments of the world. He despised its riches. Acts xx. 33. "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel." He despised the pleasures of the world. "I keep under my body." The apostle's pleasures were in the sufferings of his body, instead of the gratification of its carnal appetites. 2 Corinthians xii. 10. "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake." He despised the honours of the world. 1 Thessalonians ii. 6. "Nor of men sought we glory; neither of you, nor yet of others." He declares that the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. These were not the things that the apostle sought, but the things that were above, that were out of sight to other men. 2 Corinthians iv. 18. "While we look not at the things, which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." He longed greatly after heaven. 2 Corinthians v. 4. "For we that are in this tabernacle, do groan being burdened; not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up in life." And he tells us, that he knew no man after the flesh; that is, he did not look upon the men or things of this world, or regard them as related to the world, or as they respected the present life; but he considered all men and all things as they had relation to a spiritual nature, and to another world. In this the apostle acted as becomes a Christian; for Christians, those that are indeed so, are people that belong not to this world, and therefore, it is very unbecoming in them to have their minds taken up about these things. The example of Paul may make all such persons ashamed, who have their minds chiefly occupied about the things of the world, about gaining estates, or acquiring honours; and yet would be accounted fellow-disciples with the apostle, partakers of the same labours, and fellow-heirs of the same heavenly inheritance. And it should prompt us to strive for more indifference to the world, and for more heavenly mindedness.

Fifthly. We ought also to follow the example of the apostle in his abounding in prayer and praise. He was very earnest, and greatly engaged in those duties, and continued in them, as appears from many passages. Romans i. 8. "First I thank my

God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers." Ephesians i. 15, 16. " Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and love unto all the saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers." Colossians i. 3. " We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you." 1 Thessalonians i. 2, 3. " We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." And chapter iii. 9, 10. " For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; night and day praying exceedingly, that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" 2 Timothy i. 3. " I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers, night and day."

Sixthly. We ought to follow him in his contentment under the allotments of divine Providence. He was the subject of a vast variety of dispensations of Providence. He went through a great many changes, and was almost continually in suffering circumstances, sometimes in one respect, sometimes in another, and sometimes the subject of a great many kinds of suffering together. But yet he had attained to such a degree of submission to the will of God, as to be contented in every condition, and under all dispensations towards him. Philippians iv. 11, 12, 13. " Not that I speak in respect of want, for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Every where, and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound, and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me." What a blessed temper and disposition of mind was this to which Paul had arrived; and how happy is that man of whom it can now be said with truth! He is, as it were, out the reach of every evil. Nothing can touch him so as to disturb his rest, for he rests in every thing that God orders.

Seventhly. We should follow the apostle in his great caution in giving an account of his experience; not to represent more of himself in his words, than men should see in his deeds. In 2 Corinthians he gives somewhat of an account how he had been favoured with visions and revelations, and had been caught

up to the third heavens. And in the sixth verse, intimating that he could relate more, he breaks off, and forbears to say any thing further respecting his experience. And he gives this reason for it; viz. that he would avoid, in what he relates of himself, giving occasion for any one to be disappointed in him, in expecting more from him, by his own account of his experience and revelations, than he should see or hear of him in his conversation. His words are, "for though I would desire to glory, I shall not be a fool; for I will say the truth; but now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me." Some may wonder at this in such a man as the apostle, and may say, why should a man so eminent in his conversation, be so cautious in this matter? Why need he be afraid to declare all the extraordinary things that he had witnessed, since his life was so agreeable, so eminently answerable to his experience? But yet you see the apostle forbore upon this very account. He knew there was great need of caution in this matter. He knew that if in giving an account of his extraordinary revelations, he should give rise to an expectation of too great things in his conversation, and should not live answerably to that expectation, it would greatly wound religion. He knew that its enemies would be ready to say presently, "Who is this? The man that gives so extraordinary an account of his visions and revelations, and peculiar tokens of God's favour to him; does he live no more conformably to it?" But if such a man as the apostle, so eminent in his life, was so cautious in this respect; surely we have need to be cautious, who fail so much more in our example than he did, and in whose conversation the enemy may find so much more occasion to speak reproachfully of religion. This teaches us that it would be better to refrain wholly from boasting of our experience, than to represent ourselves as better than our deeds and conversation represent us. For men will compare one with the other. And if they do not see a correspondence between them, this will be much more to the dishonour of God, than our account will be to his honour. Let Christians, therefore, be warned to be ever cautious in this respect, after the great example of the apostle.

3. I shall mention some of those virtues of the apostle, that more immediately respected men, in which we ought to follow his example.

First. His meekness under abuses, and his love to his enemies. There were multitudes, that hated him, but there is no appearance of his hating any. The greater part of the world where he went, were his enemies. But he was the friend of every one, and laboured and prayed earnestly for the good of

all. And when he was reproached and derided and buffeted, still it was with meekness and gentleness of spirit that he bore all, and wished well to them none the less, and sought their good. 1 Corinthians iv. 12, 13. "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat." In that period of his great sufferings when he went up to Jerusalem, and there was such an uproar about him, and the people were in so furious a rage against him, eagerly thirsting for his blood; he discovered no anger or ill will towards his persecutors. At that time when he was a prisoner through their malice, and stood before king Agrippa, and Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and his blood-thirsty enemies were standing by; he replied, "I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether, such as I am, except these bonds." He wished that his accusers, and those who had bound themselves with an oath that they would neither eat nor drink till they had killed him, had all of them as great privileges and as much of the favour of heaven as himself; and that they were altogether as he was except his bonds and imprisonment, and those afflictions which they had brought upon him. He did not desire that they should be like him in that affliction, though it was the fruit of their own cruelty. And when some of the Corinthians, whom he had instructed and converted from heathenism, had dealt ill by him, had hearkened to some false teachers, that had been among them, who hated and reproached the apostle; he tells them, in 2 Corinthians xii. 15, notwithstanding these abuses, that still he would very gladly spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly he loved them, the less he should be loved by them. If they returned him no thanks for his love, but only ill will and ill treatment, still he stood ready to spend and be spent for them. And though the apostle was so hated, and had suffered so many abuses from the unbelieving Jews, yet how does he express his love to them? He prayed earnestly for them. Romans x. 1. "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved." And he went mourning for them. He went about with an heavy heart, and with continual grief and sorrow from compassion for them, under the calamities of which they were the subjects; and he declares in the most solemn manner, that he had so great desire for their salvation, that he could find it in his heart to wish himself accursed from Christ for them, and to be offered up a sacrifice, if that might be a means of their salvation. Romans ix. 1, 2, 3. We are to understand it of a temporal curse. He could be willing to die an accursed death, and so be made a curse for a time, as Christ was, if that might be a means of salvation to them. How are

those reproved by this, who, when they are abused and suffer reproach or injury have thereby indulged a spirit of hatred against their neighbour, a prejudice whereby they are always apt to entertain a distrust, and to seek and embrace opportunities against them, and to be sorry for their prosperity, and glad at their disappointments.

Secondly. He delighted in peace. When any contention happened among Christians, he was exceedingly grieved by it. As when he heard of the contentions, that broke out in the Corinthian church. He intimates to the Philippians, how he should rejoice at their living in love and peace, and therefore earnestly intreats them that they should so live. Philippians ii. 1, 2. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." And he studied those things, that should make for peace. To that end he yielded to every one as much as possible in those things that were lawful, and complied with the weakness and humours of others oftentimes, for the sake of peace. He declares that though he was free from all men, yet he had made himself servant of all. To the Jews he became as a Jew; to them that were under the law, as under the law; to them that were without law, as without law; to the weak he became as weak. He rather chose to please others, than himself, for the sake of peace, and the good of their souls. 1 Corinthians x. 33. "Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved."

Thirdly. He was of a most tender compassionate spirit towards any that were in affliction. He showed such a spirit especially in the case of the incestuous Corinthian. The crime was very great, and the fault of the church was great in suffering such wickedness among them, and this occasioned the apostle to write with some sharpness to them respecting it. But when the apostle perceived that his reproof was laid to heart by the Corinthian Christians, and that they repented and their hearts were filled with sorrow, though he rejoiced at it, yet he was so affected with their sorrow, that his heart yearned towards them, and he was almost ready to repent, that he had written so severely to them. He was full of concern about it, lest his former letter should have filled them with over much sorrow. "For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season." So he had compassion for the incestuous man, though he had been guilty of so vile a crime, and was greatly concerned that he

should be comforted. Whenever any Christian suffered or was hurt, the apostle says he felt it and suffered himself. 2 Cor. xi. 29. "Who is weak, and I am not weak, who is offended, and I burn not."

Fourthly. He rejoiced at others' prosperity and joy. When he saw the soul of any one comforted, the apostle was a sharer with him; his soul was comforted also. When he saw any Christian refreshed in his spirit, his own spirit was refreshed. 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7. "Nevertheless, God that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you, when he told us your earnest desire, your mourning, your fervent mind toward me, so that I rejoiced the more." "Therefore we were comforted in your comfort; yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all."

Fifthly. He delighted in the fellowship of God's people. He longed after them when absent. Philippians i. 8. "For God is my record how greatly I long after you in the bowels of Christ." And also, "Therefore my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown." So Romans i. 11, 12. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me."

Sixthly. He was truly courteous in his behaviour towards others. Though he was so great a man, and had so much honour put upon him of God, yet he was full of courtesy towards all men, rendering to all suitable respect. Thus when he was called before Jewish or heathen magistrates, he treated them with the honour and respect due to their places. When the Jews took him in the temple, though they behaved themselves more like devils than men, yet he addresses them in terms of high respect, "Men, brethren and fathers, hear ye my defence:" calling the common Jews his *brethren*, and saluting the Elders and Scribes with the title of *fathers*, though they were a body of infidels. So, when he pleads his cause before Festus, a heathen governor, he gives him the title that belonged to him in his station; calling him, "Most noble Festus." His courtesy also appears in his salutations in his epistles. He is particularly careful to mention many persons, directing that his salutations should be given to them. Such a degree of courtesy, in so great a person as this apostle, reproves all those professing Christians, who, though far below him, are not courteous and respectful in their behaviour to their neighbours, and especially to their superiors. Incivility is here reproved, and the too common neglect of Christians is reproved, who do not take strict care, that their children are taught good

manners and politeness, and brought up in a respectful and courteous behaviour towards others.

4. I shall mention those virtues of the Apostle that respected both God and men, in which we should imitate his example.

First. He was a man of a most public spirit; he was greatly concerned for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom, and the good of his church. We see a great many men wholly engaged in pursuit of their worldly interests: many who are earnest in the pursuit of their carnal pleasures, many who are eager in the pursuit of honours, and many who are violent in the pursuit of gain; but we probably never saw any man more engaged to advance his estate, nor more taken up with his pleasures, nor more greedy of honour, than the apostle Paul was about the flourishing of Christ's kingdom, and the good of the souls of men. The things that grieve other men are outward crosses; losses in estates, or falling under contempt, or bodily sufferings. But these things grieved not him. He made little account of them. The things that grieved him, were those that hurt the interests of religion; and about those, his tears were shed. Thus he was exceedingly grieved and wept greatly for the corruptions, that had crept into the church of Corinth, which was the occasion of his writing his first epistle to them. 2 Cor. ii. 4. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you, with many tears." The things about which other men are jealous, are their worldly advantages and pleasures. If these are threatened, their jealousy is excited, since they are above all things dear to them. But the things that kindled the apostle's jealousy, were those that seemed to threaten the interests of religion, and the good of the Church: 2 Cor. xi. 2, 3. "For I am jealous over you with a godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." The things at which other men rejoice are their amassing earthly treasures, their being advanced to honours, their being possessed of outward pleasures, and delights. But these excited not the apostle's joy; but when he saw, or heard of any thing by which the interests of religion were promoted, and the Church of Christ prospered, then he rejoiced: 1 Thess. i. 3. "Remembering without ceasing your work of faith and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father." And chapter ii. 20. "Ye are our glory and joy," He rejoiced at those things, however dear they cost him, how much soever he lost by them in his temporal interest, if the welfare of religion and the good of souls were promoted; Phil. ii. 16, 17. "Holding forth the word of life, that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in

vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." He rejoiced at the steadfastness of saints: Col. ii. 5. "For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ." And he rejoiced at the conviction of sinners, and in whatever tended to it. He rejoiced at any good, which was done, though by others, and though it was done accidentally by his enemies: Phil. i. 15, 16, 17, 18. "Some indeed preach Christ, even of envy and strife, and some also of good will. The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds. But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached, and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." When the apostle heard any thing of this nature, it was good news to him: 1 Thess. iii. 6, 7. "But now, when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tidings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us always, desiring greatly to see us, as we also you; therefore brethren, we were comforted over you in all our affliction and distress by your faith." When he heard such tidings, his heart was wont to be enlarged in the praises of God: Col. i. 3, 4. We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love, which ye have to all the saints." He was not only wont to praise God when he first heard such tidings, but as often as he thought of such things, they were so joyful to him, that he readily praised God. Phil. i. 3, 4, 5. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now." Let us compare ourselves with such an example, and examine how far we are of such a spirit. Let those on this occasion, reflect upon themselves, whose hearts are chiefly engaged in their own private temporal concerns, and are not much concerned respecting the interests of religion and the Church of Christ, if they can obtain their private aims; who are greatly grieved when things go contrary to their worldly prosperity, who see religion as it were, weltering in its blood, without much sorrow of heart. It may be, that they will say; it is greatly to be lamented that there is such declension, and it is a sorrowful thing that sin so much prevails. But if we could look into their hearts, how cold and careless should we see them. Those words are words of course. They express themselves thus chiefly, because they think it creditable to lament the decay of religion; but

they are ten times as much concerned about other things as these, about their own private interest, or some secular affairs of the town. If any thing seems to threaten their being disappointed in these things, how readily are they excited and alarmed; but how quiet and easy in their spirit, notwithstanding all the dark clouds that appear over the cause and kingdom of Christ, and the salvation of those around them! How quick and how high is their zeal against those, who they think, unjustly oppose them in their temporal interests; but how low is their zeal, comparatively, against those things, that are exceedingly pernicious of the interests of religion! If their own credit is touched, how are they awakened! but they can see the credit of religion wounded, and bleeding, and dying, with little hearty concern. Most men are of a private, narrow spirit. They are not of the spirit of the apostle Paul, nor of the Psalmist, who preferred Jerusalem before his chief joy. Psalm cxxxvii. 6.

Secondly. We ought to follow the apostle in his diligent and laborious endeavours to do good. We see multitudes incessantly labouring and striving after the world; but not more than the apostle laboured to advance the kingdom of his dear Master, and the good of his fellow-creatures. His work was very great, and attended with great difficulties and opposition; and his labour was answerably great. He laboured abundantly more than any of the apostles: 1 Cor. xv. 10. "I laboured more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." How great were the pains he took in preaching and in travelling from place to place over so great part of the world, by sea and land, and probably for the most part on foot: when he travelled by land, instructing and converting the heathen, disputing with gainsayers, and heathen Jews, and heretics, strenuously opposing and fighting against the enemies of the church of Christ, wrestling not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places; acting the part of a good soldier, as one that goes a warfare; putting on Christ and using the whole armour of God; labouring to establish and confirm, and build up the saints, reclaiming those, that were wandering, delivering those that were ensnared, enlightening the dark, comforting the disconsolate, and succouring the tempted; rectifying disorders that had happened in churches, exercising ecclesiastical discipline towards offenders, and admonishing the saints of the covenant of grace; opening and applying the scriptures, ordaining persons and giving them directions, and assisting those that were ordained; and writing epistles, and sending messengers to one, and another part of the church of Christ! He had the care of the

churches lying continually upon him: 2 Cor. xi. 28. "Besides those things, that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches." These things occasioned him to be continually engaged in earnest labour. He continued in it night and day, sometimes almost the whole night, preaching and admonishing, as appears by Acts xx. 7. 11. "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow, and continued his speech until midnight. When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed." And he did all freely, without any view to any temporal gain. He tells the Corinthians that he would gladly spend and be spent for them. Besides his labouring in the work of the gospel, he laboured very much, yea, sometimes night and day, in a handicraft trade to procure subsistence, that he might not be chargeable to others, and so hinder the gospel of Christ: 1 Thess. ii. 9. "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail, for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." And he continued this course of labour as long as he lived. He never was weary in well doing; and though he met with continual opposition, and thousands of difficulties, yet nothing discouraged him. But he kept on, pressing forward in this course of hard, constant labour to the end of his life, as appears by what he says just before his death. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." And the effects and fruits of the apostle's labours witnessed for him. The world was blessed by the good he did; not one nation only, but multitudes of nations. The effects of his labours were so great in so many nations before he had laboured twenty years, that the heathens called it his turning the world upside down. Acts xvii. 6. This very man was the chief instrument in that great work of God, the calling of the Gentiles, and the conversion of the Roman world. And he seems to have done more good, far more good, than any other man ever did from the beginning of the world to this day. He lived after his conversion not much more than thirty years; and in those thirty years he did more than a thousand men commonly do in an age. This example may well make us reflect upon ourselves, and consider how little we do for Christ, and for our fellow-creatures. We profess to be Christians as well as the apostle Paul, and Christ is worthy that we should serve him, as Paul did. But how small are our labours for God and Christ and our fellow-creatures! Though many of us keed

ourselves busy, how are our labour and strength spent, and with what is our time filled up? Let us consider ourselves a little, and the manner of spending our time. We labour to provide for ourselves and families, to maintain ourselves in credit, and to make our part good among men. But is that all for which we are sent into the world? Did he who made us and gave us our powers of mind and strength of body, and who gives us our time and our talents, give them to us chiefly to be spent in this manner; or in serving him? Many years have rolled over the heads of some of us, and what have we lived for; what have we been doing all this time? How much is the world the better for us? Were we here only to eat and to drink, and to devour the good which the earth produces? Many of the blessings of Providence have been conferred upon us; and where is the good, that we have done in return? If we had never been born, or if we had died in infancy, of how much good would the world have been deprived of? Such reflections should be made with concern, by those who pretend to be Christians. For certainly God does not plant vines in his vineyard, except for the fruit, which he expects they should bring forth. He does not hire labourers into his vineyard, but to do service. They who live only for themselves, live in vain, and shall at last be cut down, as cumberers of the earth. Let the example of Paul make us more diligent to do good for the time to come. Men that do but little good, are very ready to excuse themselves, and to say, that God has not succeeded their endeavours. But is it any wonder that we have not been succeeded, when we have been no more engaged? When God sees any persons thoroughly and earnestly engaged, continuing in it, and really faithful, he is wont to succeed them in some good measure. You see how wonderfully he succeeded the great labours of the apostle.

Thirdly. He did not only encounter great labours, but he exercised also his utmost skill and contrivance for the glory of God, and the good of his fellow-creatures; 2 Cor. xii. 16. "Being crafty, I caught you with guile." How do the men of the world not only willingly labour to obtain worldly good, but how much craft and subtilty do they use? And let us consider how it is here among ourselves. How many are our contrivances to secure and advance our own worldly concerns? Who can reckon up the number of all the schemes that have been formed among us, to gain money, and honours, and accomplish particular worldly designs? How subtle are we to avoid those things, that might hurt us in our worldly interest, and to baffle the designs of those, who may be endeavouring to hurt us! But how little is contrived for the advancement of religion, and the

good of our neighbours! How many schemes are laid by men to promote their worldly designs, where one is laid for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, and the good of men! How frequent are the meetings of neighbours to determine how they may best advance such and such worldly affairs? But how seldom are there such meetings to revive sinking religion, to maintain and advance the credit of the gospel, and to accomplish charitable designs for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, and the comfort and well being of mankind! May not these considerations justly be a source of lamentation? How many men are wise in promoting their worldly interests; but what a shame is it, that so few show themselves wise as serpents, and harmless as doves for Christ! And how commonly is it the reverse of what the apostle advises the Christian Romans, "I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil." Is it not often on the contrary with professing Christians, as it was with the people of Judah and Jerusalem; "They are wise to do evil, but to do good, they have no knowledge!"

Fourthly. The apostle Paul did willingly forego those things that were in themselves lawful, for the furtherance of the interests of religion and the good of men. Thus marriage was a thing lawful for the apostle Paul as well as for other men, as he himself asserts; but he did not use the liberty he had in this matter, because he thought he might be under greater advantages to spread the gospel in a single, than a married state. So it was lawful for the apostle to take the other course of life, as in eating and drinking, and freely using all kinds of wholesome food. And it was in itself a lawful thing for the apostle to demand a maintenance of those to whom he preached. But he forbore those things, because he supposed that in his circumstances, and in the circumstances of the Church of Christ in that day, he could more advance the interests of religion and the good of men without them. For the gospel's sake, and for the good of men, he was willing to forego all the outward advantages he could derive from them. 1 Cor. viii. 13. "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no meat while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." He would not only avoid those things that were useless in themselves, but those also that gave any occasion to sin, or which led or exposed either himself or others to sin. Then it follows in the next chapter, "Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apostle unto others, yet doubtless I am to you; for the seal of mine apostleship are ye in the Lord. Mine answer to them that do examine me is this. Have we not power

to eat and to drink? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?" The apostle did not only forbear some little things, but he put himself to great difficulties by forbearing those things that were in themselves lawful. It cost him a great deal of labour of body to maintain himself. But yet he willingly laboured, working with his own hands, and as he says, though he was free from all men, yet he made himself the servant of all, that he might gain the more. Let this induce such persons to consider themselves, whether they act altogether as become Christians, who look upon it as a sufficient excuse for all the liberties they take, that the things in which they allow themselves, are in themselves lawful, that they are nowhere forbidden, though they cannot deny but that considered in their circumstances, they are of ill tendency, and expose them to temptation, and really tend to wound the credit and interest of religion, and to be a stumbling block to others, or as the apostle expresses it, tend to cause others to offend. But they uphold themselves with this, that the things which they practise are not absolutely unlawful in themselves, and therefore they will not hearken to any counsels to avoid them. They think with themselves that it is unreasonable they should be tied up so strictly; that they may not take one and another liberty, and must be so stiff and precise above others. But why did not the apostle talk after their manner? Why did not he say within himself, it is unreasonable that I should deny myself lawful meat and drink merely to comply with the consciences of a few weak persons, that are unreasonable in their scruples? Why should I deny myself the comforts of marriage; why should I deny myself that maintenance which Christ himself has ordained for ministers, only to avoid the objection of unreasonable men? But the apostle was of another spirit. What he aimed at was by any means to promote the interest of religion, and the good of the church. And he had rather forego all the common comforts and enjoyments of life, than that religion should suffer.

Fifthly. The apostle willingly endured innumerable and extreme sufferings for the honour of Christ and the good of men. His sufferings were very great; and that not only once or twice, but he went through a long series of sufferings, that continued from the time of his conversion as long as his life lasted. So that his life was not only a life of extraordinary labour, but a life of extreme sufferings also. Labours and sufferings were mixed together, and attended each other to the end of the race which he ran. He endured sufferings of all kinds, even those

that cannot consist in the loss of temporal things. He tells us he had suffered the loss of all things, Phil. iii. 8, all his former enjoyments, which he had before his conversion. And he endured many kinds of positive afflictions. 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12. "Even unto this present hour, we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling place. And labour, working with our hands; being reviled, we bless, being persecuted, we suffer it." 2 Cor. vi. 4—11. "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; by pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left; by honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report; as deceivers, and yet true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as chastened, and not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things." None of the apostles went through so great, and such various afflictions as he: 2 Cor. xi. 23—28. "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." His sufferings were so extreme, that he did not go through a series of sufferings merely, but might be said, as it were, to go through a series of deaths. He did in effect endure the pains of death over and over again almost continually, and therefore he expresses himself as he does. 2 Cor. iv. 9—11. "Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal body." Rom. viii. 36. "As it is written for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." 1 Cor. xv. 31. "I protest by your rejoicing, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily." He was so pursued and pressed by troubles, sometimes outward

and inward troubles together, that he had no rest. 2 Cor. vii. 5. "For when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side: without were fightings, within were fears." Sometimes his sufferings were so extreme that his nature seemed just ready to faint under them: 2 Cor. i. 8. "For we would not brethren have you ignorant of our trouble, which came to us in Asia, that we were pressed out of measure above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life." And at last the apostle was deprived of his life. He suffered a violent death at Rome under the hand of that cruel tyrant, Nero, soon after he wrote the second epistle to Timothy. These things he endured for Christ's sake; for the advancement of his kingdom; as he says, he was always delivered to death for Jesus' sake. And those he endured also from love to men, and from an earnest desire of their good: 2 Tim. ii. 10. "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sake, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory." He knew what afflictions awaited him beforehand; but he would not avoid his duty, because of such afflictions. He was so resolute in seeking Christ's glory, and the good of men, that he would pursue these objects, notwithstanding what might befal him: Acts xx. 22—24. "And now behold I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befal me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Yet he went through them cheerfully and willingly, and delighted to do God's will, and to promote others' good, though it was at this great cost: Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the Church." And he was never weary. He did not, after he had suffered a long time, excuse himself, and say he thought he had done his part. Now here appears Christianity in its proper colours. To be of such a spirit as this, is to be of such a spirit as Christ so often requires of us, if we would be his disciples. This is to sell all and give to the poor. This is to take up the cross daily and follow Christ. To have such a spirit as this, is to have good evidence of being a Christian indeed, a thorough Christian, one that has given himself to Christ without reserve; one that hates father and mother, and wife and children and sisters, yea and his own life also; one that loses his life for Christ's sake, and so shall find it. And though it is not required of all that they should endure so great

sufferings as Paul did; yet it is required and absolutely necessary, that many Christians should be in a measure of this spirit, should be of a spirit to lose all things, and suffer all things for Christ, rather than not obey his commands and seek his glory. How well may our having such an example as this set before our eyes, make us ashamed, who are so backward now and then to lose little things, to put ourselves a little out of our way, to deny ourselves some convenience, to deny our sinful appetites, or to incur the displeasure of a neighbour. Alas! what thought have we of Christianity, to make much of such things as these; to make so many objections, to keep back, and contrive ways to excuse ourselves, when a little difficulty arises! What kind of thoughts had we of being Christians, when we first undertook to be such, or first pretended a willingness to be Christians? Did we never sit down and count the cost, or did we cast it up at this rate, that we thought the whole sum would not amount to such little sufferings as lie in our way?

II. I now proceed to show under what special obligations we are to follow the good example of this apostle.

Beside the obligation that rests upon us to follow the good example of all, and beside the eminence of his example, there are some special reasons why we are under greater obligations to be influenced by the good example of this great apostle, than by the very same example in others. This appears if we consider,

1. In general, that those whom God has especially appointed to be teachers in the Christian church, he has also set to be examples in his church. It is part of the charge that belongs to teachers to be examples to others. It is one thing that belongs to their work and office. So this is part of the charge, that the apostle gives to Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." The same charge was given to Titus, "In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works." And this is part of the charge the apostle Peter gives to the elders and teachers of the Christian church, "The elders which are among you, I exhort; feed the flock of God. Neither being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Thus Christ, the chief Shepherd of the sheep, whom God ordained to be the greatest teacher, he also ordained to be the greatest example to his church. And so those shepherds and teachers that are under him, according as they are appointed to be teachers, are also to be examples. They are to be guides of the flock in two ways, viz. by teaching and by example, as shepherds lead their flocks in two ways; partly by their voice by calling them, and partly by going before them, and by leading the way. And indeed guiding by word and guiding by

example, are but two different ways of teaching; and therefore both alike belong to the office of teachers in the Christian church. But if this be so, if God has especially set those to be examples in the Christian church whom he has made its teachers, then it will follow, that wherever they have left us good examples, those examples are especially to be regarded. For God has doubtless made the duty of teachers towards the church, and the duty of the church towards her teachers, to answer one another. And therefore the charge is mutual. The charge is not only to teachers to set good examples, but the charge is to the church to regard and follow their good examples: Hebrews xiii. 7. "Remember them which have the rule over you, which have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." It is with respect to the good examples of the teachers of the Christian church, as it is with their words, their instructions and exhortations. We ought to hear good instructions and good counsels of any one, let him be whom he may. But yet we are under special obligations to hearken to the good instructions and examples of those whom God has made our teachers; for that is the very office to which God has appointed them to teach and to counsel us.

2. There are two things that are to be observed in particular of the apostle Paul, which, from the foregoing general observation, will show that we are under very special obligations to regard and follow his good example.

First. God hath appointed the apostle Paul not only to be a great teacher of the Christian church in that age in which he lived, but the principal teacher of his church of any mere man in all succeeding ages. He was set of God not only to teach the church then, when he lived, but God has made him our teacher by his inspired writings. The Christian church is taught by the apostle still, and has been in every age since he lived. It is not with the penmen of the scriptures, as it is with other teachers of the Christian church. Other teachers are made the teachers of a particular flock in the age in which they live. But the penmen of the scriptures hath God made to be teachers of the church universal in all ages. And therefore, as particular congregations ought to follow the good examples of their pastors, so the church universal in all ages ought to observe and follow the good examples of the prophets and apostles, that are the penmen of the scriptures, in all ages. So the apostle James commands us to take the ancient prophets for our example, because they have been appointed of God to be our teachers, and have spoken to us in the name of the Lord. James v. 10. "Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction and patience." The prophets and apostles, in that God has made

them penmen of the scriptures, are next to Christ, the foundation of the church of God: Eph. ii. 20. "Built on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." And Paul, above all the penmen of the scriptures, is distinguished of God as being made by him the principal teacher of the Christian church of any mere man. Moses taught gospel truths under types and shadows, whereby he did, as it were, put a vail over his face. But Paul used great plainness of speech. 2 Cor. iii. 12, 13. Moses was a minister of the old testament and of the letter, that kills. But the apostle Paul is the principal minister of the new testament, of the spirit, and not of the letter. 2 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Christ has empowered this apostle to be the penman of more of the new testament than any other man, and it is by him chiefly that we have the great doctrines of it explained. And God has actually made this apostle the principal founder of the Christian church under Christ. He doubtless did more towards it than all the other apostles; and therefore is to be looked upon as the principal shepherd under Christ of the whole flock of Christ, which is a great obligation on the flock to regard and follow his good example.

Secondly. We, who are Gentiles, are especially under obligations to regard his teaching and example, because it has been mainly by means of this apostle that we have been brought into the Christian church. He was the great apostle of the Gentiles: the main instrument of that great work of God, the calling of the Gentiles. It was chiefly by his means that all the countries of Europe came by the gospel. And so it was through his hands that our nation came by the gospel. They either had the gospel from him immediately, or from those who had it from him. Had it not been for the labours of this apostle, our nation might have remained to this day in gross heathenism. This consideration should especially engage us to regard him as our guide, and should endear his good example to us. The apostle often exhorts those churches, as the church of Corinth, Phillipi, and others which he had converted from heathenism, and to which he had been a spiritual father, to be followers of him wherein he followed Christ. And we are some of them. We have been the more remarkably converted from heathenism by this apostle, and we ought to acknowledge him as our spiritual father. And we are obliged to follow his good example as children should follow the good example of their parents.

I now proceed to a general

APPLICATION

Of the whole that has been said on this subject, which may be by way of exhortation to all earnestly to endeavour to follow the

good example of this great apostle. We have heard what a spirit the apostle manifested, and after what manner he lived in the world; how earnestly he sought his own salvation, and that not only before, but also after his conversion, and how earnestly cautious he was to avoid eternal damnation, long after he had obtained a saving interest in Christ. We have heard how strong he was in faith, how great was his love to his Lord and Saviour, and how he was not ashamed of the gospel, but gloried in the cross of Christ; how he abounded in prayer and praise, how he contemned the wealth, and pleasures, and glory of the world; how contented he was with the allotments of Providence; how prudent and cautious he was in giving an account of his achievements, lest he should represent more of himself in words than men should see of him in deeds. We have heard how much he suffered under abuses, how he loved his enemies, how he delighted in peace, and rejoiced with those that rejoiced, and wept with those that wept, and delighted in the fellowship of God's people, and how courteous he was in his behaviour towards others. We have heard of what a public spirit he was, how greatly concerned for the prosperity of Christ's kingdom and the good of his church, how diligent, laborious, and indefatigable in his endeavours to do good; how he studied for ways and means to promote this end, how he exercised his skill and contrivance, willingly foregoing those thing that were in themselves lawful, and willingly endured innumerable and extraordinary sufferings. My exhortation now is to imitate this example, and to enforce this, I desire that several things may be considered.

1. Let it be considered, why it is, that we have so much written of the good example of this apostle, unless that we might follow it. We often read those things in the holy scriptures which have now been set before us on this subject; and to what purpose, unless we apply them to ourselves? We had as good never have been informed how well the apostle behaved himself, if we do not endeavour to follow him. We all profess to be Christians, and we ought to form our notions of Christianity from what is written in the scriptures by the prophets, and from the precepts and excellent examples that are there set before us. One great reason why many professors live no better, walk no more amiably, and are in so many things so unlovely, is, that they have not good notions of Christianity. They do not seem to have a right idea of that religion that is taught us in the new testament. They have not well learned Christ. The notions that some persons entertain of Christianity, are very distorted, and ill conformed to the gospel. The notions of others are very erroneous. They lay the chief stress wrong, upon things on which it ought not to be laid. They place religion almost altogether in some particular duties,

leaving out others of great weight, and it may be the weightier matters of the law. And the reason why they have no better notions of Christianity is, because they take their notions of it chiefly from those sources whence they ought not to take them. Some take them from the general cry or voice of the people, among whom they live. They see that others place religion merely, if not almost wholly, in such and such things. And hence their notions of Christianity are formed. Or they take their notions from the example of particular individuals now living, who are in great reputation for godliness. And their notion of Christianity is, that it consists in being like such persons. Hence they never have just notions of religion: 2 Cor. x. 12. "They measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise." If we would have right notions of Christianity, we should observe those in whom it shone, of whom we have an account in the scriptures. For they are the examples that God himself has selected to set before us to that end, that from thence we might form our notions of religion; and especially the example of this apostle. God knows how to select examples. If therefore we would have right notions of Christianity, we ought to follow the good example of the apostle Paul. He was certainly a Christian indeed, and an eminent Christian. We have God's abundant testimony. But Christianity is in itself an amiable thing, and so it appeared in the example of this apostle. And if the professors of it would form their notions of it from such examples as those, rather than from any particular customs and examples that we have now, it would doubtless appear much more amiable in their practice than it now does; it would win others. They would not be a stumbling block. Their light would shine. They would command reverence and esteem, and be of powerful influence.

2. If we follow the good example which this apostle has set us, it will secure to us the like comfortable and sweet influence of God, that he enjoyed through the course of his life. Let us consider what a happy life the apostle lived; what peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost he possessed: 2 Cor. i. 12. "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." How did he abound with comfort and joy, even in the midst of the greatest afflictions: 2 Cor. i. 3—5. "Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comforts, wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth in Christ." In all his tribulation his joy was exceedingly great. He seems to want words to express the

greatness of the joy which he possessed continually. He says he was filled with comfort, and was exceedingly joyful: 2 Cor. vii. 4. "I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation." How does the apostle's love seem to overflow with joy! 2 Cor. vi. 10, 11. "As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing, as poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things. O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged." How happy is such a life! How well is such happiness worth pursuing! We are ourselves the occasion of our own wounds and troubles. We bring darkness on our own souls. Professing Christians, by indulging their sloth, seek their own ease and comfort; but they defeat their own aim. The most laborious and the most self-denying Christians are the most happy. There are many who are complaining of their darkness, and inquiring what they shall do for light, and the comfortable presence of God.

3. This would be the way to be helped against temptation, and to triumph over our spiritual enemies as the apostle did. Satan assaulted him violently, and men continually persecuted him. The powers of hell combined against him. But God was with him, and made him more than a conqueror. He lived a life of triumph: 2 Cor. ii. 14. "Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ." Let us consider what an excellent privilege it would be thus to be helped against temptation. What a grief of mind is it to be so often overcome.

4. This would secure us honour from God, and an extraordinary intimacy with him. Moses enjoyed a great intimacy with God, but the apostle Paul in some respects a greater. Moses conversed with God in Mount Sinai. Paul was caught up to the third heavens. He had abundant visions and revelations more than he has told us, lest any should think him to boast. He was favoured with more of the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit than any other person. And though we cannot expect to be honoured with intimacy with heaven in just the same way, yet if we in good earnest apply ourselves, we may have greater and greater intimacy, so that we may come with boldness, and converse with God as a friend.

5. This would be the way to make us great blessings in the world. The apostle, by means of such a spirit and such a behaviour as you have heard, was made the greatest blessing to the world of any who ever lived on earth, except the man Christ Jesus himself. Wherever he went, there went a blessing with him. To have him enter a city was commonly made a greater mercy to it than if the greatest monarch on earth had come there, scattering his treasures around him among the inhabitants. Wherever he went, there did, as it were, a light shine about him, seemingly to

enlighten the benighted children of men. Silver and gold he had none. But what he imparted to many thousands was worth more to them than if he had bestowed upon them the richest jewels of which the Roman Emperor was possessed. And he was not only a blessing to that generation, but has been so since his death by the fruits of what he did in his life time, the foundations he then laid, and by the writings which he has left for the good of mankind to the end of the world. He then was, and ever since has been, a light to the church next in brightness to the Sun of Righteousness. And it was by means of his excellent spirit and excellent behaviour that he became such a blessing. Those were the things that God made useful in him for doing so much good. And if we should imitate the apostle in such a spirit and behaviour, the undoubted consequence would be, that we also should be made great blessings in the world; we should not live in vain, but should carry a blessing with us wherever we went. Instead of being cumberers of the ground, multitudes would be fed with our fruit, and would have reason to praise and bless God that he ever gave us a being. Now, how melancholy a consideration may it be to any persons that they have lived to no purpose; that the world would have been deprived of nothing, if they had never been born; and it may be, have been better without them than with them. How desirable is it to be a blessing. How great was the promise made to Abraham, "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

6. For us to follow the good example of the apostle Paul, would be the way for us to die as he did. 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day."

7. This would secure us a distinguished crown of glory hereafter. It is thought by some, and not without great probability, that the apostle Paul is the very next in glory to the man Jesus Christ himself. This is probable from his having done more good than any, and from his having done it through so great labours and sufferings. The apostle tells us, "Every man shall receive his own reward, according to his own labour."

I shall conclude with mentioning some things as encouragements for us to endeavour to follow the excellent example of this great apostle. Many may be ready to say that it is in vain for them to try. The apostle was a person so greatly distinguished; it is in vain for them to endeavour to be like him. But for your encouragement, consider,

1. That the apostle was a man of like passions with us. He had naturally the same heart, the same corruptions; was under the same circumstances, the same guilt, and the same condemnation. There is this circumstance that attends the apostle's example to encourage us to endeavour to imitate him, which did not attend the example of Christ. And yet we are called upon to imitate the example of Christ. This is probably one main reason why not only the example of Christ, but also those of mere men are set before us in the scriptures. Though you may think you have no great reason to hope to come up to the apostle's degree, yet that is no reason why you should not make his good example your pattern, and labour, as far as in you lies, to copy after him.

2. This apostle, before he was converted, was a very wicked man, and a vile persecutor. He often speaks of it himself. He sinned against great light.

3. He had much greater hinderances and impediments to eminent holiness from without than any of us have. His circumstances made it more difficult for him.

4. The same God, the same Saviour, and the same head of divine influence are ready to help our sincere endeavours, that helped him. Let us therefore not excuse ourselves, but in good earnest endeavour to follow so excellent an example. And then, however weak we are in ourselves, we may hope to experience Christ's suffering, and be able to say from our own experience, as the apostle did before him, "when I am weak, then am I strong."

SERMON VI.

LUKE xxii. 44.

And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

OUR Lord Jesus Christ, in his original nature, was infinitely above all suffering, for he was "God over all blessed for evermore;" but, when he became man, he was not only capable of suffering, but partook of that nature that is remarkably feeble and exposed to suffering. The human nature, on account of its weakness, is in scripture compared to the grass of the field, which easily withers and decays. So it is compared to a leaf; and to the dry stubble; and to a blast of wind: and the nature of feeble man is said to be but dust and ashes, to have its foundation in the dust, and to be crushed before the moth. It was this nature, with all its weakness and exposedness to sufferings, which Christ, who is the Lord God omnipotent, took upon him. He did not take the human nature on him in its first, most perfect and vigorous state, but in that feeble forlorn state which it is in since the fall; and therefore Christ is called "a tender plant," and "a root out of a dry ground." Isaiah liii. 2. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Thus, as Christ's principal errand into the world was suffering, so agreeably to that errand, he came with such a nature and in such circumstances as most made way for his suffering; so his whole life was filled up with suffering, he began to suffer in his infancy, but his suffering increased, the more he drew near to the close of his life. His suffering after his public ministry began, was probably much greater than before; and the latter part of the time of his public ministry seems to have been distinguished by suffering. The longer Christ lived in the world, the more men saw and heard of him, the more they hated him. His enemies were more and more enraged by the continuance of the opposition that he made to their lusts; and the devil having been often baffled by him, grew more and more enraged, and strengthened the battle more and more against him: so that the cloud over Christ's

head grew darker and darker, as long as he lived in the world, till it was in its greatest blackness when he hung upon the cross, and cried out, my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me! Before this, it was exceedingly dark, in the time of his agony in the garden; of which we have an account in the words now read; and which I propose to make the subject of my present discourse. ✗ The word agony properly signifies *an earnest strife*, such as is witnessed in wrestling, running, or fighting. And therefore in Luke xiii. 24. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able;" The word in the original, translated *strive*, is αγωνιζεσθε. "*Agonize*, to enter in at the strait gate." The word is especially used for that sort of strife, which in those days was exhibited in the Olympick games, in which men strove for the mastery in running, wrestling, and other such kinds of exercises; and a prize was set up that was bestowed on the conqueror. Those, who thus contended, were, in the language then in use, said to *agonize*. Thus the apostle in his epistle to the Christians of Corinth, a city of Greece, where such games were annually exhibited, says in allusion to the strivings of the combatants, "And every man that *striveth for the mastery*," in the original, "Every one that *agonizeth*, is temperate in all things." The place where those games were held, was called αγων, or *the place of agony;* and the word is particularly used in scripture for that striving in earnest prayer wherein persons wrestle with God: they are said *to agonize*, or to *be in agony*, in prayer. So the word is used Rom. xv. 30. "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye *strive* together with me in your prayers to God for me:" in the original συναγωνιζεσθαι μοι, that ye *agonize together* with me. So Colos. iv. 12. "Always *labouring* fervently for you in prayer, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God:" in the original αγωνιζων, *agonizing* for you. So that when it is said in the text that Christ was *in an agony*, the meaning is that his soul was *in a great and earnest strife and conflict.* It was so in two respects: ✗

1. As his soul was in a great and sore conflict with those terrible and amazing views and apprehensions which he then had.

2. As he was at the same time in great labour and earnest strife with God in prayer.

I propose therefore, in discoursing on the subject of Christ's agony, distinctly to unfold it, under these two propositions,

I. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a sore conflict with those terrible and amazing views, and apprehensions, of which he was then the subject.

II. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a great and earnest labour and struggle with God in prayer.

I. The soul of Christ in his agony in the garden had a sore conflict with those terrible amazing views and apprehensions, of which he was then the subject.

In illustrating this proposition I shall endeavour to show,

1. What those views and apprehensions were.

2. That the conflict or agony of Christ's soul was occasioned by those views and apprehensions.

3. That this conflict was peculiarly great and distressing; and

4. What we may suppose to be the special design of God in giving Christ those terrible views and apprehensions, and causing him to suffer that dreadful conflict, before he was crucified.

I proposed to show

First. What were those terrible views and amazing apprehensions which Christ had in his agony. This may be explained by considering,

1. The cause of those views and apprehensions; and

2. The manner in which they were then experienced.

1. The cause of those views and apprehensions, which Christ had in his agony in the garden, was the bitter cup which he was soon after to drink on the cross. The sufferings which Christ underwent in his agony in the garden, were not his greatest sufferings; though they were so very great. But his last sufferings upon the cross, were his principal sufferings; and therefore they are called "the cup that he had to drink." The sufferings of the cross, under which he was slain, are always in the scriptures represented as the main sufferings of Christ; those in which especially "he bare our sins in his own body," and made atonement for sin. His enduring the cross, his humbling himself, and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, is spoken of as the main thing wherein his sufferings appeared. This is the cup that Christ had set before him in his agony. It is manifest, that Christ had this in view at this time, from the prayers which he then offered. According to Matthew, Christ made three prayers that evening, while in the garden of Gethsemane, and all on this one subject, the bitter cup that he was to drink. Of the first, we have an account in Matt. xxvi. 39. "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt:" of the second in the 42d verse, "He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done:" and of the third in the 44th verse, "And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words." From this it plainly appears what it was of which Christ had such terrible views and apprehensions at that time. What he thus insists on in his prayers, shows on what his mind was so deeply intent. It was his sufferings on the cross,

which were to be endured the next day, when there should be darkness over all the earth, and at the same time a deeper darkness over the soul of Christ, of which he had now such lively views and distressing apprehensions.

2. The manner in which this bitter cup was now set in Christ's view.

(1.) He had a lively apprehension of it impressed at that time on his mind. He had an apprehension of the cup that he was to drink before. His principal errand into the world was to drink that cup, and he therefore was never unthoughtful of it, but always bore it in his mind, and often spoke of it to his disciples. Thus Matthew xvi. 21. "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." Again ch. xx. 17, 18, 19. "And Jesus going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, behold we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death. And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again." The same thing was the subject of conversation on the Mount with Moses and Elias when he was transfigured. So he speaks of his bloody baptism, Luke xii. 50. "But I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! He speaks of it again to Zebedee's children, Matthew xx. 22. "Are ye are able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able." He spake of his being lifted up. John viii. 28. "Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things." John xii. 34. "The people answered him, We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, The Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?" So he spake of destroying the temple of his body, John ii. 19. "Jesus answered, and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And he was very much in speaking of it a little before his agony in his dying counsels to his disciples in the 12th and 13th ch. of John. Thus this was not the first time that Christ had this bitter cup in his view. On the contrary, he seems always to have had it in view. But it seems that at this time God gave him an extraordinary view of it. A sense of that wrath that was to be poured out upon him, and of those amazing sufferings that he was to undergo, was strongly impressed on his mind by the immediate

power of God; so that he had far more full and lively apprehensions of the bitterness of the cup which he was to drink than he ever had before, and these apprehensions were so terrible, that his feeble human nature shrunk at the sight and was ready to sink.

2. The cup of bitterness was now represented as just at hand. He had not only a more clear and lively view of it than before; but it was now set directly before him, that he might without delay take it up and drink it; for then, within that same hour, Judas was to come with his band of men, and he was then to deliver up himself into their hands to the end that he might drink this cup the next day; unless indeed he refused to take it, and so made his escape from that place where Judas would come; which he had opportunity enough to do if he had been so minded. Having thus shown what those terrible views and apprehensions were which Christ had in the time of his agony; I shall endeavour to show,

II. That the conflict which the soul of Christ then endured was occasioned by those views and apprehensions. The sorrow and distress which his soul then suffered arose from that lively and full and immediate view which he had then given him of that cup of wrath; by which God the Father did as it were set the cup down before him, for him to take it and drink it. Some have inquired, what was the occasion of that distress and agony, and many speculations there have been about it, but the account which the scripture itself gives us is sufficiently full in this matter, and does not leave room for speculation or doubt. The thing that Christ's mind was so full of at that time was without doubt the same with that which his mouth was so full of: it was the dread which his feeble human nature had of that dreadful cup, which was vastly more terrible than Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace. He had then a near view of that furnace of wrath, into which he was to be cast; he was brought to the mouth of the furnace that he might look into it, and stand, and view its raging flames, and see the glowings of its heat, that he might know where he was going and what he was about to suffer. This was the thing that filled his soul with sorrow and darkness, this terrible sight as it were overwhelmed him. For what was that human nature of Christ to such mighty wrath as this? it was in itself without the supports of God, but a feeble worm of the dust, a thing that was crushed before the moth, none of God's children ever had such a cup set before them, as this first being of every creature had. But not to dwell any longer on this, I hasten to show

III. That the conflict in Christ's soul, in this view of his last sufferings, was dreadful, beyond all expression or conception. This will appear

1. From what is said of its dreadfulness in the history. By one evangelist we are told (Matthew xxvi. 37.) "He began to be sor-

rowful and very heavy; and by another, (Mark xiv. 33.) "And he taketh with him Peter, and James, and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy." These expressions hold forth the intense and overwhelming distress that his soul was in. Luke's expression in the text of his being *in an agony*, according to the signification of that word in the original, implies no common degree of sorrow, but such extreme distress that his nature had a most violent conflict with it, as a man that wrestles with all his might with a strong man who labours and exerts his utmost strength to gain a conquest over him.

2. From what Christ himself says of it, who was not wont to magnify things beyond the truth. He says, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death." Matth. xxvi. 38. What language can more strongly express the most extreme degree of sorrow? His soul was not only "sorrowful," but "exceeding sorrowful;" and not only so, but because that did not fully express the degree of his sorrow, he adds "even unto death;" which seems to intimate that the very pains and sorrows of hell, of eternal death had got hold upon him. The Hebrews were wont to express the utmost degree of sorrow that any creature could be liable to by the phrase, *the shadow of death*. Christ had now, as it were, the shadow of death brought over his soul by the near view which he had of that bitter cup that was now set before him.

3. From the effect which it had on his body, in causing that bloody sweat that we read of in the text. In our translation it is said, that "his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground." The word, rendered *great drops*, is in the original θρομβοι, which properly signifies lumps or clots; for we may suppose that the blood that was pressed out through the pores of his skin by the violence of that inward struggle and conflict that there was, when it came to be exposed to the cool air of the night, congealed and stiffened, as is the nature of blood, and so fell off from him, not in drops, but in clots. If the suffering of Christ had occasioned merely a violent sweat, it would have shown that he was in great agony; for it must be an extraordinary grief and exercise of mind that causes the body to be all of a sweat abroad in the open air, in a cold night as that was, as is evident from John xviii. 18. "And the servants and officers stood there who had made a fire of coals, (for it was cold) and they warmed themselves; and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself." This was the same night in which Christ had his agony in the garden. But Christ's inward distress and grief was not merely such as caused him to be in a violent and universal sweat, but such as caused him to sweat blood. The distress and anguish of his mind was so unspeakably extreme as to force his blood through

the pores of his skin, and that so plentifully as to fall in great clots or drops from his body to the ground. I come now to show,

IV. What may be supposed to the special end of God's giving Christ beforehand these terrible views of his last sufferings; in other words, why it was needful that he should have a more full and extraordinary view of the cup that he was to drink, a little before he drank it than ever he had before; or why he must have such a foretaste of the wrath of God to be endured on the cross, before the time came that he was actually to endure it.

Answer. It was needful, in order that he might take the cup and drink it, as knowing what he did. Unless the human nature of Christ had had an extraordinary view given him beforehand of what he was to suffer, he could not, as man, fully know beforehand what he was going to suffer, and therefore could not, as man, know what he did when he took the cup to drink it, because he would not fully have known what the cup was—it being a cup that he never drank before. If Christ had plunged himself into those dreadful sufferings, without being fully sensible beforehand of their bitterness and dreadfulness; he must have done he knew not what. As man, he would have plunged himself into sufferings of the amount of which he was ignorant, and so have acted blindfold; and of course his taking upon him these sufferings could not have been so fully his own act. Christ, as God, perfectly knew what these sufferings were; but it was more needful also that he should know as man; for he was to suffer as man, and the act of Christ in taking that cup was the act of Christ, as God man. But the man Christ Jesus hitherto never had had experience of any such sufferings as he was now to endure on the cross; and therefore he could not fully know what they were beforehand, but by having an extraordinary view of them set before him, and an extraordinary sense of them impressed on his mind. We have heard of tortures that others have undergone, but we do not fully know what they were, because we never experienced them; and it is impossible that we should fully know what they were but in one of these two ways, either by experiencing them, or by having a view given of them, or a sense of them impressed in an extraordinary way. Such a sense was impressed on the mind of the man Christ Jesus, in the garden of Gethsemane, of his last sufferings, and that caused his agony. When he had a full sight given him what that wrath of God was that he was to suffer, the sight was overwhelming to him; it made his soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death. Christ was going to be cast into a dreadful furnace of wrath, and it was not proper that he should plunge himself into it blindfold, as not knowing how dreadful

the furnace was. Therefore that he might not do so, God first brought him and set him at the mouth of the furnace, that he might look in and stand and view its fierce and raging flames, and might see where he was going, and might voluntarily enter into it and bear it for sinners, as knowing what it was. This view Christ had in his agony. Then God brought the cup that he was to drink, and set it down before him, that he might have a full view of it, and see what it was before he took it and drank it. If Christ had not fully known what the dreadfulness of these sufferings was, before he took them upon him, his taking them upon him could not have been fully his own act as man; there could have been no explicit act of his will about that which he was ignorant of; there could have been no proper trial, whether he would be willing to undergo such dreadful sufferings or not, unless he had known beforehand how dreadful they were; but when he had seen what they were, by having an extraordinary view given him of them, and then undertaken to endure them afterwards; then he acted as knowing what he did; then his taking that cup, and bearing such dreadful sufferings, was properly his own act by an explicit choice; and so his love to sinners, in that choice of his, was the more wonderful, as also his obedience to God in it. And it was necessary that this extraordinary view that Christ had of the cup he was to drink should be given at that time, just before he was apprehended. This was the most proper season for it, just before he took the cup, and while he yet had opportunity to refuse the cup; for before he was apprehended by the company led by Judas, he had opportunity to make his escape at pleasure. For the place where he was, was without the city, where he was not at all confined, and was a lonesome, solitary place; and it was the night season; so that he might have gone from that place where he would, and his enemies not have known where to have found him. This view that he had of the bitter cup was given him while he was yet fully at liberty, before he was given into the hands of his enemies. Christ's delivering himself up into the hands of his enemies, as he did when Judas came, which was just after his agony, was properly his act of taking the cup in order to drink; for Christ knew that the issue of that would be his crucifixion the next day. These things may show us the end of Christ's agony, and the necessity there was of such an agony before his last sufferings.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we may learn how dreadful Christ's last sufferings were. We learn it from the dreadful effect which the bare

foresight of them had upon him in his agony. His last sufferings were so dreadful, that the view which Christ had of them before overwhelmed him and amazed him, as it is said he began to be sore amazed. The very sight of these last sufferings was so very dreadful as to sink his soul down into the dark shadow of death; yea, so dreadful was it, that in the sore conflict which his nature had with it, he was all in a sweat of blood, his body all over was covered with clotted blood, and not only his body but the very ground under him with the blood that fell from him, which had been forced through his pores through the violence of his agony. And if only the foresight of the cup was so dreadful, how dreadful was the cup itself, how far beyond all that can be uttered or conceived! Many of the martyrs have endured extreme tortures, but from what has been said, there is all reason to think those all were a mere nothing to the last sufferings of Christ on the cross. And what has been said affords a convincing argument that the sufferings, which Christ endured in his *body* on the cross, though they were very dreadful, were yet the least part of his last sufferings; and that beside those, he endured sufferings in his soul which were vastly greater. For if it had been only the sufferings which he endured in his body, though they were very dreadful, we cannot conceive that the mere anticipation of them would have such an effect on Christ. Many of the martyrs, for aught we know, have endured as severe tortures in their bodies as Christ did. Many of the martyrs have been crucified, as Christ was; and yet their souls have not been so overwhelmed. There has been no appearance of such amazing sorrow and distress of mind either at the anticipation of their sufferings, or in their actual enduring of them.

2. From what has been said, we may see the wonderful strength of the love of Christ to sinners. What has been said shows the strength of Christ's love two ways.

1. That it was so strong as to carry him through that agony that he was then in. The suffering that he then was actually subject to, was dreadful and amazing, as has been shown, and how wonderful was his love that lasted and was upheld still! The love of any mere man or angel would doubtless have sunk under such a weight, and never would have endured such a conflict in such a bloody sweat as that of Jesus Christ. The anguish of Christ's soul at that time was so strong as to cause that wonderful effect on his body. But his love to his enemies, poor and unworthy as they were, was stronger still. The heart of Christ at that time was full of distress, but it was fuller of love to vile worms: his sorrows abounded, but his love did much more abound. Christ's soul was overwhelmed with a deluge of grief, but this was from a deluge of love to sinners

in his heart sufficient to overflow the world, and overwhelm the highest mountains of its sins. Those great drops of blood that fell down to the ground were a manifestation of an ocean of love in Christ's heart.

II. The strength of Christ's love more especially appears in this, that when he had such a full view of the dreadfulness of the cup that he was to drink that so amazed him, he would notwithstanding even then take it up, and drink it. Then seems to have been the greatest and most peculiar trial of the strength of the love of Christ, when God set down the bitter portion before him, and let him see what he had to drink, if he persisted in his love to sinners, and brought him to the mouth of the furnace that he might see its fierceness, and have a full view of it, and have time then to consider whether he would go in and suffer the flames of this furnace for such unworthy creatures, or not. This was as it were proposing it to Christ's last consideration what he would do; as much as if it had then been said to him. 'Here is the cup that you are to drink, unless you will give up your undertaking for sinners, and even leave them to perish as they deserve. Will you take this cup, and drink it for them, or not? There is the furnace into which you are to be cast, if they are to be saved; either they must perish, or you must endure this for them. There you see how terrible the heat of the furnace is; you see what pain and anguish you must endure on the morrow, unless you give up the cause of sinners. What will you do? is your love such that you will go on? Will you cast yourself into this dreadful furnace of wrath?' Christ's soul was overwhelmed with the thought; his feeble human nature shrunk at the dismal sight. It put him into this dreadful agony which you have heard described; but his love to sinners held out. Christ would not undergo these sufferings needlessly, if sinners could be saved without. If there was not an absolute necessity of his suffering them in order to their salvation, he desired that the cup might pass from him. But if sinners, on whom he had set his love, could not, agreeably to the will of God, be saved, without his drinking it, he chose that the will of God should be done. He chose to go on and endure the suffering, awful as it appeared to him. And this was his final conclusion, after the dismal conflict of his poor feeble human nature, after he had had the cup in view, and for at least the space of one hour, had seen how amazing it was. Still he finally resolved that he would bear it, rather than those poor sinners whom he had loved from all eternity should perish. When the dreadful cup was before him, he did not say within himself, why should I, who am so great and glorious a person, infinitely more honourable than all the angels of heaven, why should I go to plunge myself into such

dreadful, amazing torments for worthless wretched worms that cannot be profitable to God, or me, and that deserve to be hated by me and not to be loved? Why should I, who have been living from all eternity in the enjoyment of the Father's love, go to cast myself into such a furnace for them that never can requite me for it? Why should I yield myself to be thus crushed by the weight of divine wrath, for them who have no love to me, and are my enemies? they do not deserve any union with me, and never did, and never will do any thing to recommend themselves to me. What shall I be the richer for having saved a number of miserable haters of God and me, who deserve to have divine justice glorified in their destruction? Such, however, was not the language of Christ's heart in these circumstances; but on the contrary, his love held out, and he resolved even then, in the midst of his agony, to yield himself up to the will of God, and to take the cup and drink it. He would not flee to get out of the way of Judas and those that were with him, though he knew they were coming, but that same hour delivered himself voluntarily into their hands. When they came with swords and staves to apprehend him, and he could have called upon his Father, who would immediately have sent many legions of angels to repel his enemies, and have delivered him, he would not do it; and when his disciples would have made resistance, he would not suffer them, as you may see in Matth. xxvi. 51, and onward: "And, behold, one of them, which were with Jesus, stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into its place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he will presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye came out as against a thief, with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me. But all this was done that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled." And Christ, instead of hiding himself from Judas and the soldiers, told them, when they seemed to be at a loss whether he was the person whom they sought, and when they seemed still somewhat to hesitate, being seized with some terror in their minds, he told them so again, and so yielded himself up into their hands, to be bound by them, after he had shown them that he could easily resist them if he pleased, when a single word spoken by him, threw them backwards to the ground, as you may see in John xviii. 3, &c. "Judas then, having received a band of men and officers

from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns, and torches, and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus said unto them, I am he. As soon then, as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward and fell to the ground." Thus powerful, constant, and violent was the love of Christ; and the special trial of his love above all others in his whole life seems to have been in the time of his agony. For though his sufferings were greater afterwards, when he was on the cross, yet he saw clearly what those sufferings were to be, in the time of his agony; and that seems to have been the first time that ever Christ Jesus had a clear view what these sufferings were; and after this the trial was not so great, because the conflict was over. His human nature had been in a struggle with his love to sinners, but his love had got the victory. The thing, upon a full view of his sufferings, had been resolved on and concluded; and accordingly, when the moment arrived, he actually went through with those sufferings.

But there are two circumstances of Christ's agony that do still make the strength and constancy of his love to sinners the more conspicuous.

1. That at the same time that he had such a view of the dreadfulness of his sufferings, he had also an extraordinary view of the hatefulness of the wickedness of those for whom those sufferings were to make atonement. There are two things that render Christ's love wonderful: 1. That he should be willing to endure sufferings that were so great; and 2. That he should be willing to endure them to make atonement for wickedness that was so great. But in order to its being properly said, Christ of his own act and choice endured sufferings that were so great, to make atonement for wickedness that was so great; two things were necessary. 1. That he should have an extraordinary sense how great these sufferings were to be, before he endured them. This was given in his agony: and 2. That he should also at the same time have an extraordinary sense how great and hateful was the wickedness of men for which he suffered to make atonement; or how unworthy those were for whom he died. And both these were given at the same time. When Christ had such an extraordinary sense how bitter his cup was to be, he had much to make him sensible how unworthy and hateful that wickedness of mankind was for which he suffered; because the hateful and malignant nature of that corruption never appeared more fully than in the spite and cruelty of men in these sufferings; and yet his love was such that he went on notwithstanding to suffer for them who were full of such hateful corruption.

It was the corruption and wickedness of men that contrived and effected his death; it was the wickedness of men that agreed with Judas, it was the wickedness of men that betrayed him, and that apprehended him, and bound him, and led him away like a malefactor; it was by men's corruption and wickedness that he was arraigned, and falsely accused, and unjustly judged. It was by men's wickedness that he was reproached, mocked, buffeted, and spit upon. It was by men's wickedness that Barabbas was preferred before him. It was men's wickedness that laid the cross upon him to bear, and that nailed him to it, and put him to so cruel and ignominious a death. This tended to give Christ an extraordinary sense of the greatness and hatefulness of the depravity of mankind.

1. Because hereby in the time of his sufferings he had that depravity set before him as it is, without disguise. When it killed Christ, it appeared in its proper colours. Here Christ saw it in its true nature, which is the utmost hatred and contempt of God; in its ultimate tendency and desire which is to kill God; and in its greatest aggravation and highest act, which is killing a person that was God.

2. Because in these sufferings he felt the fruits of that wickedness. It was then directly levelled against himself, and exerted itself against him to work his reproach and torment, which tended to impress a stronger sense of its hatefulness on the human nature of Christ. But yet at the same time, so wonderful was the love of Christ to those who exhibited this hateful corruption, that he endured those very sufferings to deliver them from the punishment of that very corruption. The wonderfulness of Christ's dying love appears partly in that he died for those that were so unworthy in themselves, as all mankind have the same kind of corruptions in their hearts, and partly in that he died for those who were not only so wicked, but whose wickedness consists in being enemies to him; so that he did not only die for the wicked, but for his own enemies; and partly in that he was willing to die for his enemies at the same time that he was feeling the fruits of their enmity, while he felt the utmost effects and exertions of their spite against him in the greatest possible contempt and cruelty towards him in his own greatest ignominy, torments, and death; and partly in that he was willing to atone for their being his enemies in these very sufferings, and by that very ignominy, torment, and death that was the fruit of it. The sin and wickedness of men, for which Christ suffered to make atonement, was, as it were, set before Christ in his view.

1. In that this wickedness was but a sample of the wickedness of mankind; for the corruption of all mankind is of the same nature, and the wickedness that is in one man's heart is of the same

nature and tendency as in another's. As in water, face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man.

2. It is probable that Christ died to make atonement for that individual actual wickedness that wrought his sufferings, that reproached, mocked, buffeted, and crucified him. Some of his crucifiers, for whom he prayed that they might be forgiven, while they were in the very act of crucifying him, were afterwards, in answer to his prayer, converted, by the preaching of Peter; as we have an account of in the 2d chapter of Acts.

2. Another circumstance of Christ's agony that shows the strength of his love, is the ungrateful carriage of his disciples at that time. Christ's disciples were among those for whom he endured this agony, and among those for whom he was going to endure those last sufferings, of which he now had such dreadful apprehensions. Yet Christ had already given them an interest in the benefits of those sufferings. Their sins had already been forgiven them through that blood that he was going to shed, and they had been infinite gainers already by that dying pity and love which he had to them, and had through his sufferings been distinguished from all the world besides. Christ had put greater honour upon them than any other, by making them his disciples in a more honourable sense than he had done any other. And yet now, when he had that dreadful cup set before him which he was going to drink for them, and was in such an agony at the sight of it, he saw no return on their part but indifference and ingratitude. When he only desired them to watch with him, that he might be comforted in their company, now at this sorrowful moment they fell asleep; and showed that they had not concern enough about it to induce them to keep awake with him even for one hour, though he desired it of them once and again. But yet this ungrateful treatment of theirs, for whom he was to drink the cup of wrath which God had set before him, did not discourage him from taking it, and drinking it for them. His love held out to them, having loved his own, he loved them to the end. He did not say within himself when this cup of trembling was before him, why should I endure so much for those that are so ungrateful; why should I here wrestle with the expectation of the terrible wrath of God to be borne by me to-morrow for them that in the mean time have not so much concern for me as to keep awake with me when I desire it of them even for one hour? But on the contrary with tender and fatherly compassions he excuses this ingratitude of his disciples, and says, Matth. xxvi. 41, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation; the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak;" and went and was apprehended, and mocked, and scourged, and crucified, and poured out his soul unto death, under the heavy weight of God's dreadful wrath on the cross for them.

3d Inference. From what has been said, we may learn the wonderfulness of Christ's submission to the will of God. Christ, as he was a divine person, was the absolute sovereign of heaven and earth, but yet he was the most wonderful instance of submission to God's sovereignty that ever was. When he had such a view of the terribleness of his last sufferings, and prayed if it were possible that that cup might pass from him, i. e. if there was not an absolute necessity of it in order to the salvation of sinners, yet it was with a perfect submission to the will of God. He adds, "Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." He chose rather that the inclination of his human nature, which so much dreaded such exquisite torments, should be crossed, than that God's will should not take place. He delighted in the thought of God's will being done; and when he went and prayed the second time, he had nothing else to say but, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done;" and so the third time. What are such trials of submission as any of us sometimes have in the afflictions that we suffer in comparison of this? If God does but in his providence signify it to be his will that we should part with a child, how hardly are we brought to yield to it, how ready to be unsubmissive and froward! Or if God lays his hand upon us in some acute pain of body, how ready are we to be discontented and impatient; when the innocent Son of God, who deserved no suffering, could quietly submit to sufferings inconceivably great, and say it over and over, God's will be done! When he was brought and set before that dreadful furnace of wrath into which he was to be cast, in order that he might look into it and have a full view of its fierceness, when his flesh shrunk at it, and his nature was in such a conflict, that his body was all covered with a sweat of blood falling in great drops to the ground, yet his soul quietly yielded that the will of God should be done, rather than the will or inclination of his human nature.

4th Infer. What has been said on this subject also shows us the glory of Christ's obedience. Christ was subject to the moral law as Adam was, and he was also subject to the ceremonial and judicial laws of Moses; but the principal command that he had received of the Father was, that he should lay down his life, that he should voluntarily yield up himself to those terrible sufferings on the cross. To do this was his principal errand into the world; and doubtless the principal command that he received, was about that which was the principal errand on which he was sent. The Father, when he sent him into the world, sent him with commands concerning what he should do in the world; and his chief command of all was about that, which was the errand he was chiefly sent upon,

which was to lay down his life. And therefore this command was the principal trial of his obedience. It was the greatest trial of his obedience, because it was by far the most difficult command: all the rest were easy in comparison of this. And the main trial that Christ had, whether he would obey this command, was in the time of his agony; for that was within an hour before he was apprehended in order to his sufferings, when he must either yield himself up to them, or fly from them. And then it was the first time that Christ had a full view of the difficulty of this command; which appeared so great as to cause that bloody sweat. Then was the conflict of weak human nature with the difficulty, then was the sore struggles and wrestling with the heavy trial he had, and then Christ got the victory over the temptation, from the dread of his human nature. His obedience held out through the conflict. Then we may suppose that Satan was especially let loose to set in with the natural dread that the human nature had of such torments, and to strive to his utmost to dissuade Christ from going on to drink the bitter cup; for about that time, towards the close of Christ's life, was he especially delivered up into the hands of Satan to be tempted of him, more than he was immediately after his baptism; for Christ says, speaking of that time, Luke xxii. 53, "When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched forth no hands against me; but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." So that Christ, in the time of his agony, was wrestling not only with overwhelming views of his last sufferings, but he also wrestled, in that bloody sweat, with principalities and powers—he contended at that time with the great leviathan that laboured to his utmost to tempt him to disobedience. So that then Christ had temptations every way to draw him off from obedience to God. He had temptations from his feeble human nature, that exceedingly dreaded such torments; and he had temptations from men, who were his enemies; and he had temptations from the ungrateful carriage of his own disciples, and he had temptations from the devil. He had also an overwhelming trial from the manifestation of God's own wrath; when in the words of Isaiah, it pleased the Lord to bruise him and put him to grief. But yet he failed not, but got the victory over all, and performed that great act of obedience at that time to that same God that hid himself from him, and was showing his wrath to him for men's sins, which he must presently suffer. Nothing could move him away from his steadfast obedience to God, but he persisted in saying, "Thy will be done:" expressing not only his submission, but his obedience, not only his compliance with the disposing will of God, but also with his preceptive will. God had given him this cup to drink, and had

commanded him to drink it, and that was reason enough with him to drink it; hence he says, at the conclusion of his agony, when Judas came with his band, "The cup which my Father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it?" John xviii. 11. Christ, at the time of his agony, had an inconceivably greater trial of obedience than any man or any angel ever had. How much was this trial of the obedience of the second Adam beyond the trial of the obedience of the first Adam! How light was our first father's temptation in comparison of this! And yet our first surety failed, and our second failed not, but obtained a glorious victory, and went and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Thus wonderful and glorious was the obedience of Christ, by which he wrought out righteousness for believers, and which obedience is imputed to them. No wonder that it is a sweet penalty sown, and that God stands ready to bestow heaven as its reward on all that believe on him.

5. What has been said shows us the sottishness of secure sinners in being so fearless of the wrath of God. If the wrath of God was so dreadful, that, when Christ only expected it his human nature was nearly overwhelmed with the fear of it, and his soul was amazed, and his body all over in a bloody sweat; then how sottish are sinners, who are under the threatening of the same wrath of God, and are condemned to it, and are every moment exposed to it; and yet, instead of manifesting intense apprehension, are quiet and easy, and unconcerned; instead of being sorrowful and very heavy, go about with a light and careless heart; instead of crying out in bitter agony, are often gay and cheerful, and eat and drink, and sleep quietly, and go on in sin, provoking the wrath of God more and more, without any great matter of concern! How stupid and sottish are such persons! Let such senseless sinners consider, that that misery, of which they are in danger from the wrath of God, is infinitely more terrible than that, the fear of which occasioned in Christ his agony and bloody sweat. It is more terrible, both as it differs both in its nature and degree, and also as it differs in its duration. It is more terrible in its nature and degree. Christ suffered that which, as it upheld the honour of the divine law, was fully equivalent to the misery of the damned; and in some respect it was the same suffering; for it was the wrath of the same God; but yet in other respects it vastly differed. The difference does not arise from the difference in the wrath poured out on one and the other, for it is the same wrath, but from the difference of the subject, which may be best illustrated from Christ's own comparison. Luke xxiii. 31. "For if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" Here he calls himself the green tree, and wicked men the dry, infi-

mating that the misery that will come on wicked men will be far more dreadful than those sufferings which came on him, and the difference arises from the different nature of the subject. The green tree and the dry are both cast into the fire; but the flames seize and kindle on the dry tree much more fiercely than on the green. The sufferings that Christ endured differ from the misery of the wicked in hell in nature and degree in the following respects.

1. Christ felt not the gnawings of a guilty, condemning conscience.

2. He felt no torment from the reigning of inward corruptions and lusts as the damned do. The wicked in hell are their own tormentors, their lusts are their tormentors, and being without restraint, (for there is no restraining grace in hell,) their lusts will rage like raging flames in their hearts. They shall be tormented with the unrestrained violence of a spirit of envy and malice against God, and against the angels and saints in heaven, and against one another. Now Christ suffered nothing of this.

3. Christ had not to consider that God hated him. The wicked in hell have this to make their misery perfect, they know that God perfectly hates them without the least pity or regard to them, which will fill their souls with inexpressible misery. But it was not so with Christ. God withdrew his comfortable presence from Christ, and hid his face from him, and so poured out his wrath upon him, as made him feel its terrible effects in his soul; but yet he knew at the same time that God did not hate him, but infinitely loved him. He cried out of God's forsaking him, but yet at the same time, calls him "My God, my God!" knowing that he was his God still, though he had forsaken him. But the wicked in hell will know that he is not their God, but their judge and irreconcileable enemy.

4. Christ did not suffer despair, as the wicked do in hell. He knew that there would be an end to his sufferings in a few hours; and that after that he should enter into eternal glory. But it will be far otherwise with you that are impenitent; if you die in your present condition, you will be in perfect despair. On these accounts, the misery of the wicked in hell will be immensely more dreadful in nature and degree, than those sufferings with the fears of which Christ's soul was so much overwhelmed.

2. It will infinitely differ in duration. Christ's sufferings lasted but a few hours, and there was an eternal end to them, and eternal glory succeeded. But you that are a secure senseless sinner, are every day exposed to be cast into everlasting misery, a fire that never shall be quenched. If then the Son of God was in such amazement, in the expectation of what he was to suffer for a few hours, how sottish are you who are continu-

ally exposed to sufferings, immensely more dreadful in nature and degree, and that are to be without any end, but which must be endured without any rest day or night for ever and ever! If you had a full sense of the greatness of that misery to which you are exposed, and how dreadful your present condition is on that account, it would this moment put you into as dreadful an agony as that which Christ underwent; yea, if your nature could endure it, one much more dreadful. We should now see you fall down in a bloody sweat, wallowing in your gore, and crying out in terrible amazement.

Having thus endeavoured to explain and illustrate the former of the two propositions mentioned in the commencement of this discourse, I shall now proceed to show,

II. That the soul of Christ in his agony in the garden was in a great and earnest strife and conflict in his prayer to God. The labour and striving of Christ's soul in prayer was a part of his agony, and was without doubt a part of what is intended in the text, when it is said that Christ was in an agony; for, as we have shown, the word is especially used in scripture in other places for striving or wrestling with God in prayer. From this fact, and from the evangelist mentioning his being in agony, and his praying earnestly in the same sentence, we may well understand him as mentioning his striving in prayer as part of his agony. The words of the text seem to hold forth as much as that Christ was in an agony in prayer: "Being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground." This language seems to imply thus much, that the labour and earnestness of Christ's soul was so great in his wrestling with God in prayer that he was in a mere agony, and all over in a sweat of blood.

What I propose now, in this second proposition, is by the help of God to explain this part of Christ's agony which consisted in the agonizing and wrestling of his soul in prayer; which is the more worthy of a particular inquiry, being that which probably is but little understood; though, as may appear in the sequel, the right understanding of it is of great use and consequence in divinity. It is not as I conceive ordinarily well understood what is meant when it is said in the text that Christ *prayed more earnestly;* or what was *the thing that he wrestled with God for*, or what was the subject matter of this earnest prayer, or what was the reason of his being so very earnest in prayer at this time. And therefore, to set this whole matter in a clear light, I would particularly inquire,

1. Of what nature this prayer was;

2. What was the subject matter of this earnest prayer of Christ to the Father;

3. In what capacity Christ offered up this prayer to God ;

4. Why he was so earnest in his prayer ;

5. What was the success of this his earnest wrestling with God in prayer ; and then make some improvement.

I. Of what nature this prayer of Christ was.

Addresses that are made to God may be of various kinds. Some are confessions on the part of the individual, or expressions of his sense of his own unworthiness before God, and are thus penitential addresses to God. Others are doxologies or prayers intended to express the sense which the person has of God's greatness and glory. Such are many of the psalms of David. Others are gratulatory addresses, or expressions of thanksgiving and praise for mercies received. Others are submissive addresses, or expressions of submission and resignation to the will of God, whereby he that addresses the Majesty of heaven, expresses the compliance of his will with the sovereign will of God ; saying, "Thy will, O Lord, be done!" as David, 2 Sam. xv. 26. "But if he thus say, 'I have no delight in thee;' behold, here am I ; let him do to me as seemeth good unto him." Others are petitory or supplicatory ; whereby the person that prays, begs of God and cries to him for some favour desired of him.

Hence the inquiry is, of which of these kinds was the prayer of Christ, that we read of in the text.

Answer. It was chiefly Supplicatory. It was not Penitential, or Confessional ; for Christ had no sin or unworthiness to confess. Nor was it a Doxology or a Thanksgiving ; or merely an expression of Submission ; for none of these agree with what is said of in the text, viz. that he prayed more earnestly. When any one is said to pray earnestly, it implies an earnest request for some benefit, or favour desired ; and not merely a confession, or submission, or gratulation. So what the apostle says of this prayer, in Heb. v. 7, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard, in that he feared," shows that it was petitory, or an earnest supplication for some desired benefit. They are not confessions, or doxologies, or thanksgivings, or resignations, that are called "*supplications*" and "*strong cryings*," but petitions for some benefit earnestly desired. And having thus resolved the first inquiry, and shown that this earnest prayer of Christ was of the nature of a supplication for some benefit or favour which Christ earnestly desired, I come to inquire,

II. What was the subject matter of this supplication ; or what favour and benefit that was for which Christ so earnestly supplicated in this prayer of which we have an account in the text.

Now the words of the text are not express on this matter. It is said that Christ, "being in an agony, prayed more earnestly;" but yet it is not said, what he prayed so earnestly for. And here is the greatest difficulty attending this account: even what that was which Christ so earnestly desired, for which he so wrestled with God at that time. And though we are not expressly told in the text, yet the scriptures have not left us without sufficient light in this matter. And the more effectually to avoid mistakes, I would answer,

1. Negatively, the thing that Christ so earnestly prayed for at this time, was not that the bitter cup which he had to drink might pass from him. Christ had before prayed for this, as in the next verse but one before the text, saying, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me! nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" It is after this that we have an account that Christ being in an agony, prayed more earnestly; but we are not to understand that he prayed more earnestly than he had done before, that the cup might pass from him. That this was not the thing that he so earnestly prayed for in this second prayer, the following things seem to prove:

1. This second prayer was after the angel had appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him, the more cheerfully to take the cup and drink it. The evangelists inform us that when Christ came into the garden, he began to be sorrowful, and very heavy, and that he said his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, and that then he went and prayed to God, that if it were possible the cup might pass from him. Luke says, in the 41st and 42d verses, "that being withdrawn from his disciples about a stone's cast, he kneeled down and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done!" And then, after this, it is said in the next verse, that there appeared an angel from heaven unto him strengthening him. Now this can be understood no otherwise than that the angel appeared to him strengthening and encouraging him to go through his great and difficult work, to take the cup and drink it. Accordingly we must suppose that now Christ was more strengthened and encouraged to go through with his sufferings: and therefore we cannot suppose that after this he would pray more earnestly than before to be delivered from his sufferings; and of course that it was something else that Christ more earnestly prayed for, after that strengthening of the angel, and not that the cup might pass from him. Though Christ seems to have a greater sight of his sufferings given him after this strengthening of the angel than before that caused such an agony, yet he was more strengthened to fit him for a greater sight of them, he had

greater strength and courage to grapple with these awful apprehensions than before. His strength to bear sufferings is increased with the sense of his sufferings.

2. Christ, before his second prayer, had had an intimation from the Father, that it was not his will that the cup should pass from him. The angel's coming from heaven to strengthen him must be so understood. Christ first prays, that if it may be the will of the Father, the cup might pass; but not, if it was not his will; and then God immediately upon this sends an angel to strengthen, and encourage him to take the cup, which was a plain intimation to Christ that it was the Father's will that he should take it, and that it should not pass from him. And so Christ received it; as appears from the account which Matthew gives of this second prayer. Matth. xxvi. 42. "He went away again the second time and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me except I drink it, thy will be done." He speaks as one that now had had an intimation, since he prayed before, that it was not the will of God. And Luke tells us how, viz. by God's sending an angel. Matthew informs us, as Luke does, that in his first prayer, he prayed that if it were possible the cup might pass from him; but then God sends an angel to signify that it was not his will, and to encourage him to take it. And then Christ having received this plain intimation that it was not the will of God that the cup should pass from him, yields to the message he had received, and says, O my Father, if it be so as thou hast now signified, thy will be done. Therefore we may surely conclude that what Christ prayed more earnestly for after this, was not that the cup might pass from him, but something else; for he would not go to pray more earnestly that the cup might pass from him after God had signified that it was not his will that it should pass from him, than he did before; that would be blasphemous to suppose. And then,

3dly. The language of the second prayer, as recited by Matthew, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done," shows that Christ did not then pray that the cup might pass from him. This certainly is not praying more earnestly that the cup might pass: it is rather a yielding that point, and ceasing any more to urge it, and submitting to it as a thing now determined by the will of God, made known by the angel. And,

4. From the apostle's account of this prayer in the 5th ch. of Hebrews, the words of the apostle are these, "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up his prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared." The strong crying and tears of which the apostle speaks are doubtless the same that Luke

speaks of in the text, when he says, "he being in an agony, prayed more earnestly;" for this was the sharpest and most earnest crying of Christ, of which we have any where any account. But according to the apostle's account, that which Christ feared, and that for which he so strongly cried to God in this prayer, was something that he was heard in, something that God granted him his request in, and therefore it was not that the cup might pass from him. Having thus shown what it was not that Christ prayed for in this earnest prayer, I proceed to show,

2d. What it was that Christ so earnestly sought of God in this prayer.

I answer in one word, it was, *That God's will might be done, in what related to his sufferings.* Matthew gives this express account of it, in the very language of the prayer which has been recited several times already, "O my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done!" This is a yielding, and an expression of submission; but it is not merely that. Such words, "The will of the Lord be done," as they are most commonly used, are not understood as a supplication or request, but only as an expression of submission. But the words are not always to be understood in that sense in scripture, but sometimes are to be understood as a request. So they are to be understood in the third petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done in earth as in heaven." There the words are to be understood both as an expression of submission, and also a request, as they are explained in the Assembly's Catechism, and so the words are to be understood here. The evangelist Mark says that Christ went away again and spake the same words that he had done in his first prayer. Mark xiv. 39. But then we must understand it as of the same words with the latter part of his first prayer, "nevertheless not my will but thine be done," as Matthew's more full and particular account shows. So that the thing mentioned in the text, for which Christ was wrestling with God in this prayer, was, that God's will might be done in what related to his sufferings.

But then here another inquiry may arise, viz. What is implied in Christ's praying that God's will might be done in what related to his sufferings? To this I answer,

1. This implies a request that he might be strengthened and supported, and enabled to do God's will, by going through with these sufferings. The same as when he says, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, to do thy will, O God." It was the preceptive will of God that he should take that cup and drink it: it was the Father's command to him. The Father had given him the cup, and as it were set it down before him with the command that he should drink it. This was the greatest act of obedience that Christ was to perform. He prays for strength and

help, that his poor feeble human nature might be supported, that he might not fail in this great trial, that he might not sink and be swallowed up, and his strength so overcome that he should not hold out, and finish the appointed obedience. This was the thing that he feared, of which the apostle speaks in the 5th of Hebrews, when he says, "he was heard in that he feared." When he had such an extraordinary sense of the dreadfulness of his sufferings impressed on his mind, the fearfulness of it amazed him. He was afraid lest his poor feeble strength should be overcome, and that he should fail in so great a trial, that he should be swallowed up by that death that he was to die, and so should not be saved from death; and therefore he offered up strong crying and tears unto him that was able to strengthen him, and support, and save him from death, that the death he was to suffer might not overcome his love and obedience, but that he might overcome death, and so be saved from it. If Christ's courage had failed in the trial, and he had not held out under his dying sufferings, he never would have been saved from death, but he would have sunk in the deep mire; he never would have risen from the dead, for his rising from the dead was a reward of his victory. If his courage had failed, and he had given out, he would have ever remained from under the power of death, and so we should all have perished, we should have remained yet in our sins. If he had failed, all would have failed. If he had not overcome in that sore conflict, neither he nor we could have been freed from death, we all must have perished together. Therefore this was the saving from death that the apostle speaks of, that Christ feared and prayed for with strong crying and tears. His being overcome of death was the thing that he feared, and so he was heard in that he feared. This Christ prayed that the will of God might be done in his sufferings, even that he might not fail of obeying God's will in his sufferings; and therefore it follows in the next verse in that passage of Hebrews, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience, by the things which he suffered." That it was in this respect that Christ in his agony so earnestly prayed that the will of God might be done, viz. that he might have strength to do his will, and might not sink and fail in such great sufferings; is confirmed from the scriptures of the old testament, as particularly from the 69th psalm. The Psalmist represents Christ in that psalm, as is evident from the fact that the words of that psalm are represented as Christ's words in many places of the new testament. That psalm is represented as Christ's prayer to God when his soul was overwhelmed with sorrow and amazement, as it was in his agony; as you may see in the 1st and 2d verses, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul; I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me." But then the thing that is represented as being the thing that he feared

was failing, and being overwhelmed in this great trial: verses 14 and 15, "Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink: let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters. Let not the water-flood overflow me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me." So again in the 22d psalm, which is also represented as the prayer of Christ under his dreadful sorrow and sufferings, verses 19, 20, 21. "But be not thou far from me, O Lord; O my Strength, haste thee to help me. Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth." It was meet and suitable that Christ, when about to engage in that terrible conflict, should thus earnestly seek help from God to enable him to do his will; for he needed God's help—the strength of his human nature, without divine help, was not sufficient to carry him through. This was without doubt, that in which the first Adam failed in his first trial, that when the trial came he was not sensible of his own weakness and dependence. If he had been, and had leaned on God, and cried to him for his assistance and strength against the temptation, in all likelihood we should have remained innocent and happy creatures to this day.

2. It implies a request that God's will and purpose might be obtained in the effects and fruits of his sufferings, in the glory to his name, that was his design in them; and particularly in the glory of his grace, in the eternal salvation and happiness of his elect. This is confirmed by John xii. 27, 28. "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say?—'Father, save me from this hour:' but for this cause came I unto this hour. 'Father, glorify thy name.' Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified, and will glorify it again." There the first request is the same with the first request of Christ here in like trouble: "Now is my soul troubled and what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour.'" He first prays, as he does here, that he might be saved from his last sufferings. Then, after he was determined within himself that the will of God must be otherwise, that he should not be saved from that hour, "but for this cause," says he, "came I to this hour;" and then his second request after this is, "Father, glorify thy name!" So this is doubtless the purport of the second request in his agony when he prayed that God's will might be done. It is that God's will might be done in that glory to his own name that he intended in the effects and fruits of his sufferings, that seeing that it was his will that he should suffer, he earnestly prays that the end of his suffering in the glory of God and the salvation of the elect may not fail. And these things are what Christ so earnestly wrestled with God for in his prayer, of which we have an account in the text, and we have no reason to think, that they were not expressed in prayer as well as implied.

It is not reasonable to suppose that the evangelist in his other account of things mentions all the words of Christ's prayer. He only mentions the substance.

III. In what capacity did Christ offer up those earnest prayers to God in his agony?

In answer to this inquiry, I observe that he offered them up not as a private person, but as high priest. The apostle speaks of the strong crying and tears, as what Christ offered up as high priest. Heb. v. 6, 7. "As he says also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedeck: Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears," &c. The things that Christ prayed for in those strong cryings, were things not of a private nature, but of common concern to the whole church of which he was the high priest. That the will of God should be done in his obedience unto death, that his strength and courage should not fail, but that he should hold out, was of common concern; for, if he had failed, all would have failed and perished for ever. And of course, that God's name should be glorified in the effects and fruits of his sufferings, and in the salvation and glory of all his elect, was a thing of common concern. Christ offered up these strong cries with his flesh in the same manner as the priests of old were wont to offer up prayers with their sacrifices. Christ mixed strong crying and tears with his blood, and so offered up his blood and his prayers together, that the effect and success of his blood might be obtained. Such earnest agonizing prayers were offered with his blood, and his infinitely precious and meritorious blood was offered with his prayers.

IV. Why was Christ so earnest in those supplications? Luke speaks of them as very earnest; the apostle speaks of them as strong crying; and his agony partly consisted in this earnestness: and the account that Luke gives us, seems to imply that his bloody sweat was partly at least with the great labour and earnest sense of his soul in wrestling with God in prayer. There were three things that concurred at that time, especially to cause Christ to be thus earnest and engaged.

1. He had then an extraordinary sense how dreadful the consequence would be, if God's will should fail of being done. He had then an extraordinary sense of his own last suffering under the wrath of God, and if he had failed in those sufferings, he knew the consequence must be dreadful. He having now such an extraordinary view of the terribleness of the wrath of God, his love to the elect tended to make him more than ordinarily earnest that they might be delivered from suffering that wrath to all eternity, which could not have been if he had failed of doing

God's will, or if the will of God in the effect of his suffering had failed.

2. No wonder that that extraordinary sense that Christ then had of the costliness of the means of sinners' salvation made him very earnest for the success of those means, as you have already heard.

3. Christ had an extraordinary sense of his dependence on God, and his need of his help to enable him to do God's will in this great trial. Though he was innocent, yet he needed divine help. He was dependent on God, as man, and therefore we read that he trusted in God. Matth. xxvii. 43. "He trusted in God; Let him deliver him now if he will save him: for he said, I am the Son of God." And when he had such an extraordinary sight of the dreadfulness of that wrath he was to suffer, he saw how much it was beyond the strength of his human nature alone.

V. What was the success of this prayer of Christ?

To this I answer, He obtained all his requests. The apostle says, "He was heard in that he feared;" in all that he feared. He obtained strength and help from God, all that he needed, and was carried through. He was enabled to do and to suffer the whole will of God; and he obtained the whole of the end of his sufferings—a full atonement for the sins of the whole world, and the full salvation of every one of those who were given him in the covenant of redemption, and all that glory to the name of God, which his mediation was designed to accomplish, not one jot or tittle hath failed. Herein Christ in his agony was above all others Jacob's antitype, in his wrestling with God for a blessing; which Jacob did, not as a private person, but as the head of his posterity, the nation of Israel, and by which he obtained that commendation of God, "As a prince thou hast power with God;" and therein was a type of him who was the Prince of princes.

APPLICATION.

Great improvement may be made of the consideration of the strong crying and tears of Christ in the days of his flesh many ways for our benefit.

1. This may teach us after what manner we should pray to God, not in a cold and careless manner, but with great earnestness and engagedness of spirit, and especially when we are praying to God for those things that are of infinite importance, such as spiritual and eternal blessings. Such were the benefits that Christ prayed for with such strong crying and tears, that he might be enabled to do God's will in that great and difficult work that God had appointed him, that he might not sink and fail, but might get the victory, and so finally be delivered from death, and that God's will

and end might be obtained as the fruit of his sufferings, in the glory of God, and the salvation of the elect.

When we go before God in prayer with a cold, dull heart, and in a lifeless and listless manner pray to him for eternal blessings, and those of infinite import to our souls, we should think of Christ's earnest prayers that he poured out to God, with tears and a bloody sweat. The consideration of it may well make us ashamed of our dull, lifeless prayers to God, wherein, indeed, we rather ask a denial than ask to be heard; for the language of such a manner of praying to God, is that we do not look upon the benefit that we pray for as of any great importance, that we are indifferent whether God answers us or not. The example of Jacob in wrestling with God for the blessing, should teach us earnestness in our prayers, but more especially the example of Jesus Christ, who wrestled with God in a bloody sweat. If we were sensible as Christ was of the great importance of those benefits that are of eternal consequence, our prayers to God for such benefits would be after another manner than now they are. Our souls also would with earnest labour and strife be engaged in this duty.

There are many benefits that we ask of God in our prayers, which are every whit of as great importance to us as those benefits which Christ asked of God in his agony were to him. It is of as great importance to us that we should be enabled to do the will of God, and perform a sincere, universal, and persevering obedience to his commands, as it was to Christ that he should not fail of doing God's will in his great work. It is of as great importance to us to be saved from death as it was to Christ that he should get the victory over death, and so be saved from it. It is of as great, and infinitely greater, importance to us, that Christ's redemption should be successful in us, as it was to him that God's will should be done, in the fruits and success of his redemption.

Christ recommended earnest watchfulness and prayerfulness to his disciples, by prayer and example, both at the same time. When Christ was in his agony, and came and found his disciples asleep, he bid them watch and pray, Matth. xxvi. 41. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." At the same he set them an example of that which he commanded them, for though they slept he watched, and poured out his soul in those earnest prayers that you have heard of; and Christ has elsewhere taught us to ask those blessings of God that are of infinite importance, as those that will take no denial. We have another example of the great conflicts and engagedness of Christ's spirit in this duty. Luke vi. 12. "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God." And he

was often recommending earnestness in crying to God in prayers. In the parable of the unjust judge, Luke xviii. at the beginning; "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man; and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterwards he said within himself, Though I fear not God nor regard man, yet, because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith." Luke xi. 5, &c. "And he said unto them, which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, though he will not rise and give him because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity, he will rise and give him as many as he needeth." He taught it in his own way of answering prayer as in answering the woman of Canaan, Matth. xv. 22, &c. "And behold a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour." And as Christ prayed in his agony, so I have already mentioned several texts of scripture wherein we are directed to agonize in our prayers to God.

2. These earnest prayers, and strong cries of Christ to the Father in his agony, show the greatness of his love to sinners. For, as has been shown, these strong cries of Jesus Christ were what he offered up to God as a public person, in the capacity of high priest, and in the behalf of those whose priest he was. When he offered up his sacrifice for sinners whom he had loved from eternity, he withal offered up earnest prayers. His strong cries, his tears, and his blood were all offered up together to God, and they were all offered up for the same end, for the glory of God in the salvation of the elect. They were all offered up for the same persons,

viz. for his people. For them he shed his blood in that bloody sweat, when it fell down in clotted lumps to the ground; and for them he so earnestly cried to God at the same time. It was that the will of God might be done in the success of his sufferings, in the success of that blood, in the salvation of those for whom that blood was shed, and therefore this strong crying shows his strong love; it shows how greatly he desired the salvation of sinners. He cried to God that he might not sink and fail in that great undertaking, because if he did so, sinners could not be saved, but all must perish. He prayed that he might get the victory over death, because if he did not get the victory, his people could never obtain that victory, and they can conquer no otherwise than by his conquest. If the Captain of our salvation had not conquered in this sore conflict, none of us could have conquered, but we must have all sunk with him. He cried to God that he might be saved from death, and if he had not been saved from death in his resurrection, none of us could ever have been saved from death. It was a great sight to see Christ in that great conflict that he was in in his agony, but every thing in it was from love, that strong love that was in his heart. His tears that flowed from his eyes were from love; his great sweat was from love; his blood, his prostrating himself on the ground before the Father was from love; his earnest crying to God was from the strength and ardency of his love. It is looked upon as one principal way wherein true love and good will is shown in Christian friends one towards another, heartily to pray one for another, and it is one way wherein Christ directs us to show our love to our enemies, even praying for them. Matth. v. 44. "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you." But was there ever any prayer that manifested love to enemies to such a degree as those strong cries and tears of the Son of God for the success of his blood in the salvation of his enemies; the strife and conflict of whose soul in prayer was such as to produce his agony and his bloody sweat?

3. If Christ was thus earnest in prayer to God, that the end of his sufferings might be obtained in the salvation of sinners, then how much ought those sinners to be reproved that do not earnestly seek their own salvation! If Christ offered up such strong cries for sinners as their high priest, that bought their salvation, who stood in no need of sinners, who had been happy from all eternity without them, and could not be made happier by them, then how great is the sottishness of those sinners that seek their own salvation in a dull and lifeless manner; that content themselves with a formal attendance on the duties of religion, with their hearts in the mean time much more earnestly set after other things! They after

a sort attend on the duty of social prayer, wherein they pray to God that he would have mercy on them and save; but after what a poor dull way is it that they do it! they do not apply their heart unto wisdom, nor incline their ear to understanding; they do not cry after wisdom, nor lift up their voice for understanding; they do not seek it as silver, nor search for it as for hidden treasures. Christ's earnest cries in his agony may convince us that it was not without reason that he insisted upon it, in Luke xiii. 24, that we should strive to enter in at the strait gate, which as I have already observed to you is, in the original, Αγωνιζεσθε, "*Agonize* to enter in at the strait gate." If sinners would be in a hopeful way to obtain their salvation, they should agonize in that great concern as men that are taking a city by violence, as Matth. xi. 12. "And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." When a body of resolute soldiers are attempting to take a strong city in which they meet with great opposition, what violent conflicts are there before the city is taken! How do the soldiers press on against the very mouths of the enemies' cannon, and upon the points of their swords! When the soldiers are scaling the walls, and making their first entrance into the city, what a violent struggle is there between them and their enemies that strive to keep them out! How do they, as it were, agonize with all their strength! So ought we to seek our salvation, if we would be in a likely way to obtain it. How great is the folly then of those who content themselves with seeking with a cold and lifeless frame of spirit, and so continue from month to month, and from year to year, and yet flatter themselves that they shall be successful!

How much more still are they to be reproved, who are not in a way of seeking their salvation at all, but wholly neglect their precious souls, and attend the duties of religion no further than is just necessary to keep up their credit among men; and instead of pressing into the kingdom of God, are rather violently pressing on towards their own destruction and ruin, being hurried on by their many headstrong lusts, as the herd of swine were hurried on by the legion of devils, and ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters! Matth. viii. 32.

4. From what has been said under this proposition, we may learn after what manner Christians ought to go through the work that is before them. Christ had a great work before him when that took place, of which we have an account in the text. Though it was very near the close of his life, yet he then, when his agony began, had the chief part of the work before him that he came into the world to do; which was to offer up that sacrifice which he offered in his last sufferings, and therein to perform the greatest act of his obedience to God. And so the Christians have a great

work to do, a service they are to perform to God, that is attended with great difficulty. They have a race set before them that they have to run, a warfare that is appointed them. Christ was the subject of a very great trial in the time of his agony, so God is wont to exercise his people with great trials. Christ met with great opposition in that work that he had to do, so believers are like to meet with great opposition in running the race that is set before them. Christ, as man, had a feeble nature, that was in itself very insufficient to sustain such a conflict, or to support such a load as was coming upon him. So the saints have the same weak human nature, and beside that, great sinful infirmities that Christ had not, which lay them under great disadvantages, and greatly enhance the difficulty of their work. Those great tribulations and difficulties that were before Christ, were the way in which he was to enter into the kingdom of heaven; so his followers must expect, "through much tribulation, to enter into the kingdom of heaven." The cross was to Christ the way to the crown of glory, and so it is to his disciples. The circumstances of Christ and of his followers in those things are alike, their case, therefore, is the same; and therefore Christ's behaviour under those circumstances, was a fit example for them to follow. They should look to their Captain, and observe after what manner he went through his great work, and the great tribulations which he endured. They should observe after what manner he entered into the kingdom of heaven, and obtained the crown of glory, and so they also should run the race that is set before them. "Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Particularly,

(1.) When others are asleep, they should be awake, as it was with Christ. The time of Christ's agony was the night season, the time wherein persons were wont to be asleep: it was the time wherein the disciples that were about Christ were asleep, but Christ then had something else to do than to sleep; he had a great work to do; he kept awake, with his heart engaged in this work. So should it be with the believers of Christ; when the souls of their neighbours are asleep in their sins, and under the power of a lethargic insensibility and sloth, they should watch and pray, and maintain a lively sense of the infinite importance of their spiritual concerns. 1 Thes. v. 6. "Therefore let us not sleep, as do others, but let us watch and be sober."

(2.) They should go through their work with earnest labour as Christ did. The time when others were asleep was a time when Christ was about his great work and was engaged in it with all his might, agonizing in it; conflicting and wrestling, in tears, and in blood. So should Christians with the utmost earnestness improve their time with souls engaged in this work, pushing through the opposition they meet with in it, pushing through all difficulties and sufferings there are in the way, running with patience the race set before them, conflicting with the enemies of their souls with all their might as those that wrestle not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world, and spiritual wickedness in high places.

(3.) This labour and strife should be, that God may be glorified, and their own eternal happiness obtained in a way of doing God's will. Thus it was with Christ: what he so earnestly strove for was, that he might do the will of God, that he might keep his command, his difficult command ,without failing in it, and that in this way God's will might be done, in that glory to his ever great name, and that salvation to his elect that he intended by his sufferings. Here is an example for the saints to follow in that holy strife, and race, and warfare, which God has appointed them; they should strive to do the will of their heavenly Father, that they may, as the apostle expresses it, Rom. xii. 2, "Prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," and that in this way they may glorify God, and may come at last to be happy for ever in the enjoyment of God.

(4.) In all the great work they have to do, their eye should be to God for his help to enable them to overcome. Thus did the man Christ Jesus: he strove in his work even to such an agony and bloody sweat. But how did he strive? It was not in his own strength, but his eyes were to God, he cries unto him for his help and strength to uphold him, that he might not fail; he watched and prayed, as he desired his disciples to do; he wrestled with his enemies and with his great sufferings, but at the same time wrestled with God to obtain his help, to enable him to get the victory. Thus the saints should use their strength in their Christian course, to the utmost, but not as depending on their own strength, but crying mightily to God for his strength to make them conquerors.

(5.) In this way they should hold out to the end as Christ did. Christ in this way was successful and obtained the victory and won the prize; he overcome, and is set down with the Father in his throne. So Christians should persevere and hold out in their great work to the end; they should continue to run their race till they have come to the end of it; they should be faithful unto the death as Christ was; and then, when they

have overcome, they shall sit down with him in his Throne. Rev. iii. 21. "To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

5. Hence burdened and distressed sinners, if any such are here present, may have abundant ground of encouragement to come to Christ for salvation. Here is great encouragement to sinners to come to this high priest that offered up such strong crying and tears with his blood, for the success of his sufferings in the salvation of sinners. For,

1st. Here is great ground of assurance that Christ stands ready to accept of sinners, and bestow salvation upon them, for those strong cries of his that he offered up in the capacity of our high priest, show how earnestly desirous he was of it. If he was not willing that sinners should be saved, be they ever so unworthy of it, then why would he so wrestle with God for it in such a bloody sweat? Would any one so earnestly cry to God with such costly cries, in such great labour and travail of soul for that, that he did not desire that God should bestow? No, surely! but this shows how greatly his heart was set on the success of his redemption, and therefore since he has by such earnest prayers, and by such a bloody sweat obtained salvation of the Father to bestow on sinners, he will surely be ready to bestow it upon them, if they come to him for it; otherwise he will frustrate his own design; and he that so earnestly cried to God that his design might not be frustrated, will not, after all, frustrate it himself.

2. Here is the strongest ground of assurance that God stands ready to accept of all those that come to him for mercy through Christ, for this is what Christ prayed for in those earnest prayers, whose prayers were always heard, as Christ says, John xi. 42. "And I knew that thou hearest me always." And especially may they conclude, that heard *their* high priest in those strong cries that he offered up with his blood, and that especially on the following account.

(1.) They were the most earnest prayers that ever were made. Jacob was very earnest when he wrestled with God; and many others have wrestled with God with many tears; yea, doubtless many of the saints have wrestled with God with such inward labour and strife as to produce powerful effects on the body. But so earnest was Christ, so strong was the labour and fervency of his heart, that he cried to God in a sweat of blood; so that if any earnestness and importunity in prayer ever prevailed with God, we may conclude that that prevailed.

(2.) He who then prayed was the most worthy person that ever put up a prayer. He had more worthiness than ever men

or angels had in the sight of God, according as by inheritance he has obtained a more excellent name than they; for he was the only begotten Son of God, infinitely lovely in his sight, the Son in whom he declared once and again he was well pleased. He was infinitely near and dear to God, and had more worthiness in his eyes ten thousand times than all men and angels put together. And can we suppose any other than that such a person was heard when he cried to God with such earnestness? Did Jacob, a poor sinful man, when he had wrestled with God, obtain of God the name of ISRAEL, and that encomium that as a prince he had power with God, and prevailed? and did Elijah, who was a man of like passions, and of like corruptions with us when he prayed, earnestly prevail on God to work such great wonders? and shall not the only begotten Son of God, when wrestling with God in tears and blood, prevail, and have his request granted him?

Surely there is no room to suppose any such thing; and therefore, there is no room to doubt whether God will bestow salvation on those that believe in him, at his request.

(3.) Christ offered up these earnest prayers with the best plea for an answer that ever was offered to God, viz. his own blood; which was an equivalent for the thing that he asked. He not only offered up strong cries, but he offered them up with a price fully sufficient to purchase the benefit he asked.

(4.) Christ offered this price, and those strong cries both together; for at the same time that he was pouring out these earnest requests for the success of his redemption in the salvation of sinners, he also shed his blood. His blood fell down to the ground at the same instant that his cries went up to heaven. Let burdened and distressed sinners that are ready to doubt of the efficacy of Christ's intercession for such unworthy creatures as they, and to call in question God's readiness to accept them for Christ's sake, consider these things. Go to the garden where the Son of God was in an agony, and where he cried to God so earnestly, and where his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, and then see what a conclusion you will draw up from such a wonderful sight.

6. The godly may take great comfort in this that Christ has as their high priest offered up such strong cries to God. You that have good evidence of your being believers in Christ and his true followers, and servants, may comfort yourselves in this, that Christ Jesus is your high priest, that that blood, which Christ shed in his agony, fell down to the ground for you, and that those earnest cries were sent up to God for you, for the success of his labours and sufferings in all that good you stood in

need of in this world, and in your everlasting happiness in the world to come. This may be a comfort to you in all losses, and under all difficulties that you may encourage your faith and strengthen your hope, and cause you greatly to rejoice. If you were under any remarkable difficulties it would be a great comfort to you to have the prayers of some man that you looked upon to be a man of eminent piety, and one that had a great interest at the throne of grace, and especially if you knew that he was very earnest and greatly engaged in prayer for you. But how much more may you be comforted in it that you have an interest in the prayers and cries of the only begotten and infinitely worthy Son of God, and that he was so earnest in his prayers for you, as you have heard!

7. Hence we may learn how earnest Christians ought to be in their prayers and endeavours for the salvation of others. Christians are the followers of Christ, and they should follow him in this. We see from what we have heard, how great the labour and travail of Christ's soul was for others' salvation, and what earnest and strong cries to God accompanied his labours. Here he hath set us an example. Herein he hath set an example for ministers who should as co-workers with Christ travail in birth with them till Christ be found in them. Gal. iv. 19. "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again, until Christ be formed in you." They should be willing to spend and be spent for them. They should not only labour for them, and pray earnestly for them, but should, if occasion required, be ready to suffer for them, and to spend not only their strength, but their blood for them. 2 Cor. xii. 15. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Here is an example for parents, showing how they ought to labour and cry to God for the spiritual good of their children. You see how Christ laboured and strove and cried to God for the salvation of his spiritual children; and will not you earnestly seek and cry to God for your natural children?

Here is an example for neighbours one towards another how they should seek and cry for the good of one another's souls, for this is the command of Christ that they should love one another as Christ loved them. John xv. 12. Here is an example for us, showing how we should earnestly seek and pray for the spiritual and eternal good of our enemies, for Christ did all this for his enemies, and when some of those enemies were at that very instant plotting his death, and busily contriving to satiate their malice and cruelty, in his most extreme torments, and most ignominious destruction.

SERMON VII.

ROMANS ii. 8, 9.

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.

IT is the drift of the apostle in the three first chapters of this epistle to show, that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, and therefore cannot be justified by works of law, but only by faith in Christ. In the first chapter he had shown that the Gentiles were under sin: in this he shows that the Jews also are under sin, and that however severe they were in their censures upon the Gentiles, yet they themselves did the same things; for which the apostle very much blames them: "Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things." And he warns them not to go on in such a way, by forewarning them of the misery to which they will expose themselves by it, and by giving them to understand that instead of their misery being less than that of the Gentiles, it would be the greater, for God's distinguishing goodness to them above the Gentiles. The Jews thought that they should be exempted from future wrath, because God had chosen them to be his peculiar people. But the apostle informs them that there should be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man; not only to the Gentiles, but to every soul; and to the Jews first and chiefly, when they did evil, because their sins were more aggravated.

In the text we find,

1. A description of wicked men; in which may be observed those qualifications of wicked men which have the nature of a cause, and those which have the nature of an effect.

Those qualifications of wicked men here mentioned that have the nature of a cause, are their being *contentious*, and *not obeying the truth*, but *obeying unrighteousness*. By their being contentious, is meant their being contentious against the truth, their

quarrelling with the gospel, their finding fault with its declarations and offers. Unbelievers find many things in the ways of God at which they stumble, and by which they are offended. They are always quarrelling and finding fault with one thing or another, whereby they are kept from believing the truth and yielding to it. Christ is to them a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence. They do not obey the truth, that is, they do not yield to it, they do not receive it with faith. That yielding to the truth and embracing it, which there is in saving faith, is called *obeying*, in scripture. Rom. vi. 17. "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Heb. v. 9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Rom. i. 5. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name:" But they obey unrighteousness instead of yielding to the gospel, they are under the power and dominion of sin, and are slaves to their lusts and corruptions.

It is in those qualifications of wicked men that their wickedness radically consists; their unbelief and opposition to the truth, and their slavish subjection to lust, are the foundation of all wickedness.

Those qualifications of wicked men, which have the nature of an effect, are their doing evil. This is the least of their opposition against the gospel, and of their slavish subjection to their lusts; that they do evil. Those wicked principles are the foundation, and their wicked practice is the superstructure; those were the root, and this is the fruit.

2. The punishment of wicked men, in which may be also noticed the cause and the effect.

Those things mentioned in their punishment that have the nature of a cause are *indignation* and *wrath;* i. e. the indignation and wrath of God. It is the anger of God that will render wicked men miserable; they will be the subjects of divine wrath, and hence will arise their whole punishment.

Those things in their punishment that have the nature of an effect, are *tribulation* and *anguish*. Indignation and wrath in God, will work extreme sorrow, trouble, and anguish of heart, in them.

Doctrine. Indignation, wrath, misery, and anguish of soul, are the portion that God has allotted to wicked men.

Every one of mankind must have the portion that belongs to him. God allots to each one his portion; and the portion of the wicked is nothing but wrath, and distress, and anguish of soul. Though they may enjoy a few empty and vain pleasures and delights, for a few days while they stay in this world, yet that which

is allotted to them by the Possessor and Governor of all things to be their portion, is only indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. This is not the portion that wicked men choose; the portion that they choose is worldly happiness, yet it is the portion that God carves out for them; it is the portion that they in effect choose for themselves. For they choose those things that naturally and necessarily lead to it, and those that they are plainly told, times without number, will issue in it. Prov. viii. 36. "But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." But whether they choose it or not, this will and must be the portion to all eternity of all who live and die wicked men. Indignation and wrath shall pursue them as long as they live in this world, shall drive them out of the world, and shall follow them into another world; and there wrath and misery shall abide upon them throughout eternity.

The method that I shall take in treating this subject, is to describe the wrath and misery of which wicked men shall be the subjects, both here and hereafter, in the successive parts and periods of it, according to the order of time.

I. I shall describe the wrath that often pursues wicked men in this life. Indignation and wrath often begin with them here.

1. God oftentimes in wrath leaves them to themselves. They are left in their sins, and left to undo themselves, and work out their own ruin; he lets them alone in sin. Hos. iv. 17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." He often leaves them to go great lengths in sin, and does not afford them that restraining grace that he does to others. He leaves them to their own blindness, so that they always remain ignorant of God and Christ, and of the things that belong to their peace. They are sometimes left to hardness of heart, to be stupid and senseless, so that nothing will ever thoroughly awaken them. They are left to their own hearts lusts, to continue in some wicked practices all their days. Some are left to their covetousness, some to drunkenness, some to uncleanness, some to a proud, contentious, and envious spirit, and some to a spirit of finding fault and quarrelling with God. God leaves them to their folly, to act exceedingly foolishly, to delay and put off the concerns of their souls from time to time, never to think the present time the best, but always to keep it at a distance, and foolishly to continue flattering themselves with hopes of long life, and to put far away the evil day, and to bless themselves in their hearts, and say, "I shall have peace, though I add drunkenness to thirst." Some are so left that they are miserably hardened and senseless, when others all around them are awakened, and greatly concerned, and inquire what they shall do to be saved.

Sometimes God leaves men to a fatal backsliding for a misimprovement of the strivings of his spirit. They are let alone, to

backslide perpetually. Dreadful is the life and condition of those who are thus left of God. We have instances of the misery of such in God's holy word, particularly of Saul and Judas. Such are, sometimes, very much left to the power of Satan to tempt them, to hurry them on in wicked courses, and exceedingly to aggravate their own guilt and misery.

2. Indignation and wrath are sometimes exercised towards them in this world, by their being cursed in all that concerns them. They have this curse of God following them in every thing. They are cursed in all their enjoyments. If they are in prosperity, it is cursed to them; if they possess riches, if they have honour, if they enjoy pleasure, there is the curse of God that attends it. Psalm xcii. 7. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they may be destroyed for ever."

There is a curse of God that attends their ordinary food: every morsel of bread which they eat, and every drop of water which they drink. Psalm lxix. 22. "Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare let it become a trap." They are cursed in all their employments, in whatsoever they put their hands to; when they go into the field to labour, or are at work at their respective trades. Deut. xxviii. 16. "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field." The curse of God remains in the houses where they dwell, and brimstone is scattered in their habitations. Job xviii. 15. The curse of God attends them in the afflictions which they meet with, whereas the afflictions that good men meet with, are fatherly corrections, and are sent in mercy. The afflictions which wicked men meet with are in wrath, and come from God as an enemy, and are the foretaste of their everlasting punishment. The curse of God attends them also in their spiritual enjoyments and opportunities, and it would have been better for them not to have been born in a land of light. Their having the Bible and the sabbath, is only to aggravate their guilt and misery. The word of God when preached to them is a savour of death unto death. Better would it be for them, if Christ had never come into the world, if there had never been any offer of a Saviour. Life itself is a curse to them; they live only to fill up the measure of their sins. What they seek in all the enjoyments, and employments, and concerns of life, is their own happiness; but they never obtain it; they never obtain any true comfort, all the comforts which they have are worthless and unsatisfying. If they lived a hundred years with never so much of the world in their possession, their life is all filled up with vanity. All that they have is vanity of vanities, they find no true rest for their souls, they do but feed on the east wind, they have no real contentment. Whatever out-

ward pleasures they may have, their souls are starving. They have no true peace of conscience, they have nothing of the favour of God. Whatever they do, they live in vain, and to no purpose; they are useless in the creation of God, they do not answer the end of their being. They live without God, and have not the presence of God, nor any communion with him. But on the contrary, all that they have and all that they do, does but contribute to their own misery, and render their future and everlasting state the more dreadful. The best of wicked men live but miserable and wretched lives, with all their prosperity; their lives are most undesirable, and whatever they have, the wrath of God abides upon them.

3. After a time they must die. Eccles. ix. 3. "This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

Death is a far different thing when it befals wicked men, from what it is when it befals good men; to the wicked it is in execution of the curse of the law, and of the wrath of God. When a wicked man dies, God cuts him off in wrath, he is taken away as by a tempest of wrath, he is driven away in his wickedness. Prov. xiv. 32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." Job xviii. 18. "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world." Job xxvii. 21. "The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and as a storm, hurleth him out of his place." Though wicked men while they live, may live in worldly prosperity, yet they cannot live here always, but they must die. The place that knoweth him, shall know him no more; and the eye that hath seen him shall see him no more in the land of the living.

Their bounds are unchangeably set, and when they are come to those bounds they must go, and must leave all their worldly good things. If they have lived in outward glory, their glory shall not descend after them; they get nothing while they live that they can carry away. Eccles. v. 15. "As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return, to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand." He must leave all his substance unto others. If they are at ease and in quietness, death will put an end to their quietness, will spoil all their carnal mirth, and will strip them of all their glory. As they came naked into the world, so naked must they return, and go as they came. If they have laid up much goods for many years, if they have laid in stores, as they hope, for great comfort and pleasure, death will cut them off

from all. Luke xii. 16, &c. "And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? and he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, thou fool! this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided." If they have many designs and projects in their breasts for promoting their outward prosperity, and worldly advantage; when death comes, it cuts all off at one blow. Psalms cxlvi. 4. "His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." And so whatever diligence they have had in seeking their salvation, death will disappoint all such diligence, it will not wait for them to accomplish their designs and fulfil their schemes. If they have pleased and pampered, and adorned their bodies, death will spoil all their pleasure and their glory; it will change their countenances to a pale and ghastly aspect. Instead of their gay apparel and beautiful ornaments, they shall have only a winding sheet; their house must be the dark and silent grave; and that body which they deified, shall turn to loathsome rottenness, shall be eaten of worms, and turn to dust. Some wicked men die in youth, wrath pursues them, and soon overtakes them; they are not suffered to live out half their days. Job. xxxvi. 14. "They die in youth, and their life is among the unclean." Psalm lv. 23. "But thou, O God, shall bring them down into the pit of destruction: bloody and deceitful men shall not live out half their days." They are sometimes overtaken in the very midst of their sin and vanity; and death puts a sudden end to all their youthful pleasures. They are often stopped in the midst of a career in sin, and then if their hearts cleave ever so fast to those things, they must be rent from them; they have no other good but outward good; but then they must eternally forsake it, they must close their eyes for ever on all that has been dear and pleasant to them here.

4. Wicked men are oftentimes the subjects of much tribulation and anguish of heart on their death beds. Sometimes the pains of body are very extreme and dreadful; and what they endure in those agonies and struggles for life, after they are past speaking, and when body and soul are rending asunder, none can know. Hezekiah had an awful sense of it; he compares it to a lion's breaking all his bones. Isaiah xxxviii. 12, 13. "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shep-

herd's tent: I have cut off as a weaver my life; he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me." But this is but little to what is sometimes undergone by wicked men in their souls when they are on their death beds. Death appears sometimes with an exceedingly terrible aspect to them; when it comes and stares them in the face, they cannot bear to behold it. It is always so, if wicked men have notice of the approach of death, and have reason and conscience in exercise, and are not either stupid or distracted. When this king of terrors comes to show himself to them, and they are called forth to meet him, O how do they dread the conflict! But meet him they must: "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." Death comes to them with all his dreadful armour, and his sting not taken away; and it is enough to fill their souls with torment that cannot be expressed. It is an awful thing for a person to be lying on a sick bed, to be given over by physicians, to have friends stand weeping round the bed as expecting to part with him; and in such circumstances as those, to have no hope, to be without an interest in Christ, and to have the guilt of his sins lying on his soul, to be going out of the world without his peace being made with God, to stand before his holy judgment-seat in all his sins, without any thing to plead, or answer. To see the only opportunity to prepare for eternity coming immediately to an end, after which there shall be no more time of probation, but his case will be unalterably fixed, and there never will be another offer of a Saviour; for the soul to come just to the very edge of the boundless gulf of eternity, and insensibly to launch forth into it, without any God or Saviour to take care of it; to be brought to the edge of the precipice, and to see himself falling down into the lake of fire and brimstone, and to feel that he has no power to stop himself: who can tell the shrinkings and misgivings of heart in such a case? How does he endeavour to hang back, but yet he must go on; it is in vain to wish for further opportunity! O how happy does he think those that stand about him, who may yet live, may have their lives continued longer, when he must go immediately into an endless eternity! How does he wish it might be with him as with those who have a longer time to prepare for their trial! but it must not be so. Death, sent on purpose to summon him, will give him no release nor respite: he must go before the holy judgment seat of God, as he is to have his everlasting state

determined according to his works. To such persons, how differently do things appear from what they did in the time of health, and when they looked at death as at a distance! How differently does sin look to them now; those sins which they used to make light of! How dreadful is it now to look back and consider how they have spent their time, how foolish they have been, how they have gratified and indulged their lusts, and lived in ways of wickedness; how careless they have been, and how they have neglected their opportunities and advantages, how they have refused to hearken to counsel, and have not repented in spite of all the warnings that were given. Prov. v. 11, 12, 13. "And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed, and say, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof; and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined mine ear to them that instructed me!"

How differently does the world appear to them now! They used to set much by it, and have their hearts taken up with it, but what does it avail them now! how insignificant are all their riches! Prov. xi. 4. "Riches profit not in the day of wrath: but righteousness delivereth from death." What different thoughts have they now of God, and of his wrath! They used to make light of the wrath of God, but how terrible does it now appear! How does their heart shrink at the thoughts of appearing before such a God! How different are their thoughts of time! Now time appears precious; and O what would they not give for a little more time! Some have in such circumstances been brought to cry out, O, a thousand worlds for an hour, for a *moment!* And how differently does eternity now appear! now it is awful indeed. Some have been brought on a death bed to cry out, O that word Eternity! Eternity! Eternity! What a dismal gulf does it appear to them, when they come to the very brink! They often at such times cry for mercy, and cry in vain. God called, and they would not hear. "They set at nought his counsels, and would none of his reproofs. Now also he laughs at their calamity, and mocks when their fear cometh." They beseech others to pray for them, they send for ministers, but all often fails them. They draw nearer and nearer to death, and eternity comes more and more immediately in view. And who can express their horror, when they feel themselves clasped in the cold arms of death, when their breath fails more and more, and their eyes begin to be fixed and grow dim! That which is then felt by them, cannot be told nor conceived. Some wicked men have much of the horror and despair of hell in their last sickness. Eccles. v. 17. "All his days also he eateth in darkness, and he hath much sorrow and wrath with his sickness."

II. I shall describe the wrath that attends wicked men hereafter.

1. The soul, when it is separated from the body, shall be cast down into hell. There is without doubt a particular judgment by which every man is to be tried at death, beside the general judgment: for the soul, as soon as it departs from the body, appears before God to be judged. Eccl. xii. "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it:" that is, to be judged and disposed of by him. Heb. ix. 27. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." But this particular judgment is probably no such solemn transaction, as that which will be at the day of judgment; the soul must appear before God, but not in the manner that men shall appear at the end of the world. The souls of wicked men shall not go to heaven to appear before God, neither shall Christ descend from heaven for the soul to appear before him; neither is it to be supposed, that the soul shall be carried to any place where there is some special symbol of the divine presence, in order to be judged. But as God is every where present, so the soul shall be made immediately sensible of his presence. Souls in a separate state shall be sensible of the presence of God and of his operations in another manner than we now are. All separate spirits may be said to be before God: the saints are in his glorious presence, and the wicked in hell are in his dreadful presence; they are said to be tormented in the presence of the Lamb. Rev. xiv. 10. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." So the soul of a wicked man, at its departure from the body, will be made immediately sensible that it is before an infinitely holy and dreadful God and his own final Judge; and will then see how terrible a God he is, he will see how holy a God he is, how infinitely he hates sin; he will be sensible of the greatness of God's anger against sin, and how dreadful is his displeasure. Then will he be sensible of the dreadful majesty and power of God, and how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. Then the soul shall come naked with all its guilt, and in all its filthiness, a vile, loathsome, abominable creature, an enemy to God, a rebel against him, with the guilt of all its rebellion and disregard of God's commands, and contempt of his authority, and slight of the glorious gospel, before God as its Judge. This will fill the soul with horror and amazement. It is not to be supposed that this judgment will be attended with any voice or any such outward transactions as the judgment at the end of the

world; but God shall manifest himself in his strict justice inwardly, to the immediate view of the soul, and to the sense and apprehension of the conscience: This particular judgment probably will not hinder, but that the soul shall be cast into hell immediately when it goes from the body; as soon as ever the soul departs from the body, the soul shall know what its state and condition are to be to all eternity. As long as there is life, there is hope. The man, while he lived, though his case was exceedingly dreadful, yet had some hope; when he lay dying, there was a possibility of salvation. But when once the union between soul and body is broken, then that moment the case becomes desperate, and there remains no hope, no possibility. On their death-beds, perhaps, they had some hope that God would pity them and hear their cries, or that he would hear the prayers of their pious friends for them; they were ready to lay hold on something which they had at some time met with, some religious affection or some change in their external conduct, and to flatter themselves that they were then converted; they were able to indulge some degree of hope from the moral lives that they had lived, that God would have respect to them and save them; but as soon as ever the soul parts from the body, from that moment the case will be absolutely determined. there will then be an end for ever to all hope, to every thing that men hang upon in this life; the soul then shall know certainly that it is to be miserable to all eternity, without any remedy. It shall see that God is its enemy; it shall see its Judge clothed in his wrath and vengeance. Then its misery will begin, it will that moment be swallowed up in despair; the great gulf will be fixed between it and happiness, the door of mercy will be for ever shut up, the irrevocable sentence will be passed. Then shall the wicked know what is before them. Before, the soul was in distress for fear how it would be; but now, all its fears shall come upon it; it shall come upon it as a mighty flood, and there will be no escaping. The soul was full of amazement before through fear; but now, who can conceive the amazement that fills it that moment when all hope is cut off, and it knows that there never will be any deliverance.!

When a good man dies, his soul is conducted by holy angels to heaven. Luke xvi. 22. "And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died and was buried." So we may well suppose that when a wicked man dies, his soul is seized by wicked angels; that they are round his bed ready to seize the miserable soul as soon as it is parted from the body. And with what fierceness and fury do those cruel spirits fly upon their prey; and the soul shall be left in their hands. There shall be no good angels to guard and defend it. God will take no merciful care of it, there is nothing

to help it against those cruel spirits that shall lay hold of it to carry it to hell, there to torment it for ever. God will leave it wholly in their hands, and will give it up to their possession, when it comes to die; and it shall be carried down into hell, to the abode of devils and damned spirits. If the fear of hell on a death-bed sometimes fills the wicked with amazement, how will they be overwhelmed when they feel its torments, when they shall find them not only as great but far greater than their fears! They shall find them far beyond what they could conceive of before they felt them; for none know the power of God's anger, but they that experience it. Psalm xc. 11. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath."

Departed spirits of wicked men, are doubtless carried to some particular place in the universe, which God has prepared to be the receptacle of his wicked, rebellious, and miserable subjects; a place where God's avenging justice shall be glorified; a place built to be the prison, where devils and wicked men are reserved till the day of judgment.

2. Here the souls of wicked men shall suffer extreme and amazing misery in a separate state, until the resurrection. This misery is not indeed their full punishment; nor is the happiness of the saints before the day of judgment their full happiness. It is with the souls of wicked men, as it is with devils. Though the devils suffer extreme torment now, yet they do not suffer their complete punishment; and therefore it is said, that they are cast down to hell, and bound in chains. 2 Peter ii. 4. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." Jude 6. "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." They are reserved in the state they are in; and for what are they reserved, but for a greater degree of punishment? and therefore are they said to tremble for fear. James ii. 19. "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe and tremble." Hence when Christ was on earth, the devils were greatly afraid that Christ was come to torment them. Matth. viii. 29. "And, behold, they cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Mark v. 7. "And cried with a loud voice, and said, what have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not."

But yet they are there in extreme and inconceivable misery; they are there deprived of all good, they have no rest nor comfort, and they are subject to the wrath of God; God there executes wrath on them without mercy, and they are swallowed up in

wrath. Luke xvi. 24. "And he cried, and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." Here we are told that, when the rich man died, he lift up his eyes being in torment, and he tells Abraham that he is tormented in a flame; and it seems that the flame was not only about him, but in him; he therefore asks for a drop of water to cool his tongue. This doubtless is to represent to us that they are full of the wrath of God as it were with fire, and they shall there be tormented in the midst of devils and damned spirits; and they shall have inexpressible torment from their own consciences. God's wrath is the fire that never shall be quenched, and conscience is the worm that never dies. How much do men suffer from horror of conscience sometimes in this world, but how much more in hell! What bitter and tormenting reflections will they have concerning the folly they have been guilty of in their lives, in so neglecting their souls, when they had such an opportunity for repentance; that they went on so foolishly to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, to add to the record of their sins from day to day, to make their misery yet greater and greater; how they have kindled the fires of hell for themselves, and spent their lives in gathering the fuel! They will not be able to help revolving such thoughts in their minds, and how tormenting will they be! And those who go to hell, never can escape thence, there they remain imprisoned till the day of judgment, and their torments remain continually. Those wicked men who died many years ago, their souls went to hell, and there they are still; those who went to hell in former ages of the world, have been in hell ever since, all the while suffering torment. They have nothing else to spend their time in there, but to suffer torment, they are kept in being for no other purpose; and though they have many companions in hell, yet they are no comfort to them, for there is no friend, no love, no pity, no quietness, no prospect, no hope.

3. The separate souls of the wicked, besides the present misery that they suffer, shall be in amazing fear of their more full punishment at the day of judgment. Though their punishment in their separate state be exceedingly dreadful, and far more than they can bear, though it be so great as to sink and crush them, yet this is not all; they are reserved for a much greater and more dreadful punishment at the day of judgment; their torment will then be vastly augmented, and continue in that augmentation to all eternity. Their punishment will be so much greater then, that their misery in this separate state is but as an imprisonment before an execution; they, as well as the devils, are bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. Separate spirits are called "spirits in prison." 1 Peter iii. 19. "By which also he

went and preached unto the spirits in prison." And if the imprisonment be so dreadful, how dreadful indeed will be the execution! When we are under any great pain of body at any time, how do we dread the least addition to it! its continuance is greatly dreaded, much more its increase. How much more will those separate spirits that suffer the torments of hell dread that augmentation and completing of their torment which there will be at the day of judgment, when what they feel already, is vastly more than they can support themselves; when they shall be as it were begging for one drop of water to cool their tongues, when they would give ten thousand worlds for the least abatement of their misery! How sinking will it be to think that instead of that, the day is coming when God shall come forth out of heaven to sentence them to a far more dreadful degree of misery, and to continue them under it for ever! What experience they have of the dreadfulness of God's wrath convinces them fully how terrible a thing his wrath is; they will therefore be exceedingly afraid of that full wrath which he will execute at the day of judgment; they will have no hope of escaping it, they will know assuredly that it will come.

The fear of this makes the devils, those mighty, proud and stubborn spirits, to tremble: they believe what is threatened, and therefore tremble. If this fear overcomes them, how much more will it overwhelm the souls of wicked men! All hell trembles at the thoughts of the day of judgment.

4. When the day of judgment comes they shall rise to the resurrection of damnation. When that day comes, all mankind, that have died from off the face of the earth shall arise; not only the righteous, but also the wicked. Dan. xii. 2. "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." Rev. xx. 13. "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man according to his works." The damned in hell know not the time when the day of judgment will be, but when the time comes it will be made known, and it will be the most dreadful news that ever was told in that world of misery. It is always a doleful time in hell; the world of darkness is always full of shrieks and doleful cries; but when the news is heard, that the day appointed for the judgment is come, hell will be filled with louder shrieks and more dreadful cries than ever before. When Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to judgment, the news of it will fill both earth and hell with mourning and bitter crying. We read that all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, and so shall all the inhabitants of hell, and then must the souls of the wicked come up to be united to their bodies, and stand before

the Judge. They shall not come willingly, but shall be dragged forth as a malefactor is dragged out of his dungeon to execution. They were unwilling when they died to leave the earth to go to hell; but now they will be much more unwilling to come out of hell to go to the last judgment. It will be no deliverance to them, it will only be a coming forth to their execution. They will hang back, but must come; the devils and damned spirits must come up together. The last trumpet will then be heard, this will be the most terrible sound to wicked men and devils that ever was heard; and not only the wicked, that shall then be found dwelling on the earth, shall hear it, but also those that are in their graves. John v. 28, 29. "Marvel not at this; for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation;" and then must the souls of the wicked enter their bodies again, which will be prepared only to be organs of torment and misery. It will be a dreadful sight to them when they come to their bodies again, those bodies which were formerly used by them as the organs and instruments of sin and wickedness, and whose appetites and lusts they indulged and gratified. The parting of soul and body was dreadful to them when they died, but their meeting again at the resurrection will be more dreadful. They shall receive their bodies loathsome and hideous, agreeably to that shame and everlasting contempt to which they shall arise. As the bodies of the saints shall arise more glorious than when on earth, and shall be like unto Christ's glorious body, so we may well suppose that the bodies of the wicked will arise proportionably more deformed and hideous. Oftentimes in this world a polluted soul is hid in a fine and comely body, but it will not be so then when things shall appear as they are; the form and aspect of the body shall be answerable to the hellish deformity of the soul. Thus shall they rise out of their graves, and shall lift up their eyes, and see the Son of God in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels with him. Then shall they see their Judge in his awful majesty, which will be the most amazing sight to them that ever they saw, and will still add new horrors. That awful and terrible majesty in which he will appear, and the manifestation of his infinite holiness, will pierce their souls. They shall come forth out of their graves all trembling and astonished; fearfulness shall surprise them.

5. Then must they appear before their judge to give up their account. They will find no mountains or rocks to fall upon them, that can cover them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Many of them will see others at that time, who were formerly their acquaintance, who shall appear with glorious bodies, and with joyful countenances and songs of praise, and mounting

up as with wings to meet the Lord in the air, while they are left behind. Many shall see their former neighbours and acquaintance, their companions, their brothers, and their wives taken and they left. They shall be summoned to go and appear before the judgment seat; and go they must, however unwilling; they must stand at Christ's left hand, in the midst of devils, and wicked men. This shall again add still further amazement, and will cause their horror still to be in a further degree than ever. With what horror will that company come together! and then shall they be called to their account; then shall be brought to light the hidden things of darkness; then shall all the wickedness of their hearts be made known; then shall be declared the actual wickedness they have been guilty of; then shall appear their secret sins that they have kept hid from the eye of the world; then shall be manifested in their true light those sins that they used to plead for, and to excuse and justify. And then shall all their sins be set forth in all their dreadful aggravations, all their filthiness will be brought to light to their everlasting shame and contempt. Then it shall appear how heinous many of those things were, that they in their life-time made light of; then will it appear how dreadful their guilt is in thus ill-treating so glorious and blessed a Saviour. And all the world shall see it, and many shall rise up in judgment against them and condemn them; their companions whom they tempted to wickedness, others whom they have hardened in sin by their example, shall rise up against many of them; and the heathen that have had no advantages in comparison of them, and many of whom have yet lived better lives than they, shall rise up against them; and they shall be called to a special account; the Judge will reckon with them, they shall be speechless, they shall be struck dumb, their own consciences bearing testimony against them, and shall cry loud against them, for they shall then see how great and terrible a God he is, against whom they have sinned. Then shall they stand at the left hand, while they see others whom they knew on earth sitting at the right hand of Christ in glory, shining forth as the sun, accepted of Christ, and sitting with him to judge and condemn them.

6. Then the sentence of condemnation shall be pronounced by the Judge upon them. Matth. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This sentence will be pronounced with awful majesty; and there shall be great indignation, and dreadful wrath shall then appear in the Judge, and in his voice, with which he shall pronounce the sentence; and what a horror and amazement will these words strike into the hearts of the wicked, on whom they shall be pronounced! Every word and syllable shall be like the most amazing thunder to them, and shall pierce their souls like

the fiercest lightning. The Judge will bid them depart from him; he will drive them from his presence, as exceedingly abominable to him, and he shall give them the epithet *accursed;* they shall be an accursed company, and he will not only bid them depart from his presence, but into everlasting fire, to dwell there as their only fit habitation. And what shows the dreadfulness of the fire, is, that it is prepared for the devil and his angels: they shall lie for ever in the same fire in which the devils, those grand enemies of God, shall be tormented. When this sentence shall be pronounced, there shall be in the vast company at the left hand tremblings, and mourning, and crying, and gnashing of teeth, in a new manner, beyond all that ever was before. If the devils, those proud and lofty spirits, tremble many ages beforehand at the bare thoughts of this sentence, how will they tremble when it comes to be pronounced! And how, alas! will wicked men tremble! Their anguish will be aggravated by hearing that blessed sentence pronounced on those who shall be at the right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

7. Then the sentence shall be executed. When the Judge bids them depart, they must go; however loth, yet they must go. Immediately upon the finishing of the judgment and the pronouncing of the sentence, will come the end of the world. The frame of this world shall be dissolved. The pronouncing of that sentence will probably be followed with amazing thunders, that shall rend the heavens, and shake the earth out of its place. 2 Peter iii. 10. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burnt up." Then shall the sea and the waves roar, and the rocks shall be thrown down, and the mountains shall rend asunder, and there shall be one universal wreck of this great world. Then shall the heavens be dissolved, and then the earth shall be set on fire. As God in wrath once destroyed the world by a flood of water, so now shall he cause it to be all drowned in a deluge of fire; and the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; 2 Peter iii. 10; and that great company of devils and wicked men must then enter into those everlasting burnings to which they are sentenced.

8. In this condition they shall remain throughout the never-ending ages of eternity. Their punishment shall be then complete, and it shall remain in this completion for ever. Now shall all that come upon them which they so long trembled for fear of, while their souls were in a separate state. They will dwell in a fire that never shall be quenched, and here they must wear out

eternity. Here they must wear out one thousand years after another, and that without end. There is no reckoning up the millions of years or millions of ages; all arithmetic here fails, no rules of multiplication can reach the amount, for there is no end. They shall have nothing to do to pass away their eternity, but to conflict with those torments; this will be their work for ever and ever; God shall have no other use or employment for them; this is the way that they must answer the end of their being. And they never shall have any rest, nor any atonement, but their torments will hold up to their height, and shall never grow any easier by their being accustomed to them. Time will seem long to them, every moment shall seem long to them, but they shall never have done with the ages of their torment.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence what need have we to take care that our foundation for eternity be sure? They who build on a false foundation, are not secure from this misery. They who build up a refuge of lies, will find that their refuge must fail them; their wall that they have daubed with untempered mortar will fall. The more dreadful the misery is the more need have we to see that we are safe from it; it will be dreadful indeed to be disappointed in such a case. To please ourselves with dreams and vain imaginations of our being the children of God, and of going to heaven, and at last to awake in hell, to see our refuge swept away, and our hope eternally gone, and to find ourselves swallowed up in flames, and to see an endless duration of it before us; how dreadful will this be!

There will be many that will be thus disappointed. Many shall come to the door and shall find it shut, who expected to find it open; and shall knock, but Christ will tell them that he knows them not, and he will bid them depart, and it will be in vain for them to tell Christ what affections they have had, and how religious they were, and how well they were accounted of on earth. They shall have no other answer but, "Depart from me, I know you not, ye that work iniquity." Let us all consider this, and give all diligence, to see that we build sure, if by any means we may at last be found in Christ. Let us see to it that we are indeed well secured from this dreadful misery. What will it avail us to please ourselves with a notion of being converted, and being beloved of God, and what will it avail us to have the good opinion of our neighbours for a few days, if we must at last be cast into hell, and appear at the day of judgment at the left hand, and have our eternal portion with unbelievers? A false hope cannot profit us, it is a thousand times worse than none. And who are more miserable than those who think that God has pardoned their sins,

and who expect to have a portion with the righteous hereafter, but are all the while going headlong down into this dreadful misery? What case can be more awful than the case of those who are thus led blindfold to the slaughter; promising themselves a happiness that is never like to come, but on the contrary are sinking into endless tribulation and anguish!

Let every one therefore, who entertains hope of his own state, see to it, that he be well built; and let him not rest in past attainment, but reach forth towards those things that are before with all his might.

II. Hence we derive an argument for the awakening of ungodly men. This indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, is the portion allotted to you if you continue in your present condition. Thou art the man spoken of; it is to thee that all this misery is assigned by the threatening of God's holy word; it is on thee that this wrath of God abides; thou art now in a state of condemnation to this misery. John iii. 18. "He that believeth not is condemned already; because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." It is not already executed upon you, but you are already condemned to it, you are not merely exposed to condemnation, but you are under the actual sentence of condemnation. This is the portion that is already allotted to you by the law, and you are under the law and not under grace. This misery is the misery into which you are every day in danger of dropping, you are not safe from it one hour. How soon it may come upon you, you know not; you hang over it by a thread, that is continually growing more and more feeble. This dreadful misery in all its successive parts belongs to you, and is your due. Your friends and your neighbours, and all around you, if they knew what your condition was, might well lift up a loud and bitter cry over you, whenever they behold you, and say, Here is an unhappy being condemned to be given up eternally into the hands of devils to be tormented by them; here is a miserable man who is in danger every day of being swallowed up in the bottomless gulf of wo and misery. Here is a wretched undone creature condemned to lie down for ever in unquenchable fire, and to dwell in everlasting burnings; and he has no interest in a Saviour, he has nothing to defend him, he has nothing wherewith to appease the wrath of an offended God. Here consider two things.

1. You have no reason to question whether those future miseries and torments which are threatened in God's word are realities. Do not flatter yourself with thinking that it may not be so. Say not, how do I know, that there is any such misery to be inflicted in another world; how do I know but all is a fable, and that when I come to die there will be an end of me, and that it will

be with me as it is with the beasts. Do not say, how do I know, but that all those things are only bugbears of man's inventing; how do I know that the scriptures, that threaten those things, are the word of God; or if he has threatened those things, it may be it is only to frighten men to keep them to their duty, it may be he never intends to do as he threatens.

I say that there is no ground for any such suspicion, neither is there any reason for it; for that there should be no future punishment is not only contrary to scripture, but reason. It is a most unreasonable thing to suppose that there should be no future punishment, to suppose that God, who had made man a rational creature able to know his duty, and sensible that he is deserving punishment when he does it not; should let man alone, and let him live as he will, and never punish him for his sins, and never make any difference between the good and the bad; that he should make the world of mankind and then let it alone, and let men live all their days in wickedness, in adultery, murder, robbery, and persecution, and the like, and suffer them to live in prosperity, and never punish them; that he should suffer them to prosper in the world far beyond many good men, and never punish them hereafter. How unreasonable is it to suppose, that he who made the world, should leave things in such confusion, and never take any care of the government of his creatures, and that he should never judge his reasonable creatures! Reason teaches that there is a God, and reason teaches that if there be, he must be a wise and just God, and that he must take care to order things wisely and justly among his creatures; and therefore it is unreasonable to suppose that man dies like a beast, and that there is no future punishment. And if there be a future punishment, it is unreasonable to suppose that God has not somewhere or other given men warning of it, and revealed to them what kind of punishment they must expect. Will a wise law-giver keep his subjects in ignorance as to what punishment they must expect for breaking his laws? And if God has revealed it, where is it to be found but in the scripture; what revelation have we of a future state if it is not there revealed? Where does God tell mankind what kind of rewards and punishments they must expect, if not here? and it is abundantly manifest by innumerable evidences, that these threatenings are the threatenings of God, that this awful book is his revelation. And since God has threatened, there is no room to question whether he will fulfil; for he hath said it, yea, he hath sworn it, that he will repay the wicked to his face according to threatenings, and that he will glorify himself in their destruction, and that this heaven and earth shall pass away. How foolish then is the thought that God may only threaten such punishment to frighten men, and that he never intends to execute it! For as surely as God is

God, he will do as he has said; he will destroy the mountains of iniquity as he has threatened, and there shall be no escaping. How vain are the thoughts of those who flatter themselves that God will not fulfil his threatenings, and that he only frightens and deceives men in them; as though God could in no other way govern the world than by making use of fallacious tricks and deceits to delude his subjects! Those that entertain such thoughts, however they may harden themselves by them for the present, will cherish them but a little while; their experience will soon convince them that God is a God of truth, and that his threatenings are no delusions. They will be convinced that he is a God who will by no means clear the guilty, and that his threatenings are substantial, and not mere shadows, when it will be too late to escape them. Deut. xxix. 18, 19, 20, 21. "Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the Lord our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations: lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood, and it come to pass, when he heareth the words of this curse, that he bless him in his heart, saying, I shall have peace, though I walk in the imagination of mine heart, to add drunkenness to thirst: the Lord will not spare him; but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven. And the Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law." Psalm l. 21. "These things hast thou done, and I kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself, but I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes."

2. There is no reason to suspect that possibly ministers set forth this matter beyond what it really is, that possibly it is not so dreadful and terrible as is pretended, and that ministers strain the description of it beyond just bounds. Some may be ready to think so, because it seems to them incredible that there should be so dreadful a misery to any creature; but there is no reason for any such thoughts as these, if we consider,

First. How great a punishment the sins of wicked men deserve. The scripture teaches us that any one sin deserves eternal death: Rom. vi. 23. "For the wages of sin is death: but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." And that it deserves the eternal curse of God. Deut. xxvii. 26. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them: and all the people shall say amen." Gal. iii. 10. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under

the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." Which things imply that the least sin deserves total and eternal destruction. Eternal death, in the least degree of it, amounts to such a degree of misery as is the perfect destruction of the creature, the loss of all good, and perfect misery; and so does being accursed of God imply it. To be cursed of God, is to be devoted to perfect and ultimate destruction. The scripture teaches that wicked men shall be punished to their full desert, that they shall pay all the debt.

Secondly. There is no reason to think that ministers describe the misery of the wicked beyond what it is, because the scripture teaches us that this is one end of ungodly men, to show the dreadfulness and power of God's wrath. Rom. ix. 22. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." It is often spoken of as part of the glory of God, that he is a terrible and dreadful God. Ps. lxviii. 35. "O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places:" that he is a consuming fire. Ps. lxvi. 3. "How terrible art thou in thy works! through the greatness of thy power shall thine enemies submit themselves unto thee:" and that herein one part of the glory of God is represented as consisting, that it is so dreadful a thing to injure and offend God. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion, the wrath of a man is sometimes dreadful, but the future punishment of ungodly men is to show what the wrath of God is; it is to show to the whole universe the glory of God's power. 2 Thess. i. 9. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." And therefore the punishment which we have described is not at all incredible, and there is no reason to think that it has been in the least described beyond what it really is.

Thirdly. The scripture teaches that the wrath of God on wicked men is dreadful beyond all that we can conceive. Ps. xc. 11. "Who knoweth the power of thine anger? even according to thy fear, so is thy wrath." As it is but little that we know of God, as we know and can conceive of but little of his power and his greatness, so it is but a little that we know or can conceive of the dreadfulness of his wrath; and therefore there is no reason to suppose that we set it forth beyond what it is. We have rather reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost and thought our utmost, all that we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of the reality.

We are taught that the reward of the saints is beyond all that can be spoken or conceived of. Eph. iii. 20. "Now unto

him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think." 1 Cor. ii. 9. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." And so we may rationally suppose that the punishment of the wicked will also be inconceivably dreadful.

Fourthly. There is no reason to think that we set forth the misery of hell beyond the reality, because the scripture teaches us that the wrath of God is according to his fear. Ps. xc. 11. This passage asserts that the wrath of God is according to his awful attributes; his greatness and his might, his holiness and power. The majesty of God is exceedingly great and awful, but according to his awfulness, so is his wrath; this is the meaning of the words; and therefore we must conclude that the wrath of God is indeed beyond all expression, and signification terrible. How great and awful indeed is his majesty, who has made heaven and earth, and in what majesty will he come to judge the world at the last day! He will come to take vengeance on ungodly men. The sight of this majesty will strike wicked men with apprehensions and fears of destruction.

Fifthly. The description which I have given of the tribulation and wrath of ungodly men, is not beyond the truth, for it is the very description which the scriptures give of it. The scriptures represent that the wicked shall be cast into a furnace of fire; not only a fire, but a furnace. Matth. xiii. 42. "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Rev. xx. 15. "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Ps. xxi. 8, 9. "Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies; thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee. Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time of thine anger; the Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath, and the fire shall devour them."

If, therefore, I have described this misery beyond the truth, then the scriptures have done the same. It is evident then, that there is no reason to flatter yourselves with such imaginations. If God be true, you shall find the wrath of God, and your future misery full as great; and not only so, but much greater; you will find that we know but little, and have said but little about it, and that all our expressions are faint in comparison of the reality.

III. Hence may be derived an argument to convince wicked men of the justice of God in allotting such a portion to them. Wicked men, when they hear it declared how awful the misery is of which they are in danger, often have their hearts lifted up against God for it; it seems to them very hard for God to deal

so with any of his creatures. They cannot see why God should be so very severe with wicked men, for their sin and folly for a little while in this world; and when they consider that he has threatened such punishments, they are ready to entertain blasphemous thoughts against him. I would therefore endeavour to show you how justly you lie exposed to that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish of which you have heard. Particularly I would show,

1st. How just it would be in God for ever to leave you to yourself: it would be most just in God to refuse to be with you, or help you.

You have embraced and refused to let go those things which God hates; you have refused to forsake your lusts, and to abandon those ways of sin that are abominable to him. When God has commanded you to forsake them, how have you refused, and still have retained them, and been obstinate in it! Neither is your heart yet to this very day diverted from sin; but it is dear to you, you allow it the best place in your heart, you place it on the throne there. Would it be any wonder therefore if God should utterly leave you, seeing you will not leave sin? God has often declared his hatred of iniquity; and is it any wonder, that he is not willing to dwell with that which is so odious to him? Is it not reasonable that God should insist that you should part with your lusts in order to your enjoying his presence; and seeing you have so long refused, how just would it be if God should utterly forsake you? You have retained and harboured God's mortal enemies, sin and Satan; how justly therefore might God stand at a distance! Is God obliged to be present with any who harbour his enemies, and refuse to forsake them? Would God be unjust, if he should leave you utterly to yourself, so long as you will not forsake your idols?

Consider how just it would be in God to let you alone, since you have let God alone. You have not sought God for his presence and help as you ought to have done; you have neglected him; and would it not therefore be just if he should neglect you? How long have many of you lived in neglecting to seek him? how long have you restrained prayer before him? Since therefore you refused so much as to seek the presence and help of God, and did not think them worth praying to him for, how justly might he for ever withhold them, and so leave you wholly to yourself?

You have done what in you lies to drive God away from you, and to cause him wholly to leave you. When God in times past has not let you alone, but has been unwearied in awakening you, have you not resisted the motions and influences of his spirit; have you not refused to be conducted by him, or to yield to him.?

Zech. vii. 11. "But they refused to hearken, and pulled away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear." How justly therefore might God refuse to move or strive any more! When God has been knocking at your door, you have refused to open to him; how just is it therefore that he should go away, and knock at your door no more! When the spirit of God has been striving with you, have you not been guilty of grieving the Holy Spirit by giving way to a quarrelling temper, and by yielding yourself a prey to lust? And have not some of you quenched the spirit, and been guilty of backsliding? and is God obliged, notwithstanding all this, to continue the striving of his spirit with you, to be resisted and grieved still, as long as you please? On the contrary, would it not be just if his spirit should everlastingly leave you, and let you alone?

2. How just it would be if you should be cursed in all your concerns in this world. It would be just if God should curse you in every thing, and cause every thing you enjoy, or are concerned in, to turn to your destruction.

You live here in all the concerns of life as an enemy to God; you have used all your enjoyments and possessions against God, and to his dishonour; would it not therefore be just if God should curse you in them, and turn them all against you, and to your destruction? What temporal blessing has God given you, which you have not used in the service of your lusts, in the service of sin and Satan? If you have been in prosperity, you have made use of it to God's dishonour; when you have waxed fat, you have forgotten the God that made you. How just therefore would it be if God's curse should attend all your enjoyments! Whatsoever employments you have followed, you have not served God in them, but God's enemies; how just therefore would it be if you should be cursed in all your employments! The means of grace that you have enjoyed, you have not made use of as you ought to have done; you have made light of them, and have treated them in a careless disregardful manner; you have been the worse and not the better for them. You have so attended and used sabbaths, and spiritual opportunities, that you have only made them occasions of manifesting your contempt of God and Christ, and divine things, by your careless and profane manner of attending them; would it not therefore be most just that God's curse should attend your means of grace and the opportunities which you enjoy for the salvation of your soul?

You have improved your time only to heap up provocations and add to your transgressions, in opposition to all the calls and warnings that could be given you; how just therefore would it be if God should turn life itself into a curse to you, and suffer you to live only to fill up the measure of your sins!

You have contrary to God's counsel made use of your own enjoyments to the hurt of your soul, and therefore if God should turn them to the hurt and ruin of your soul, he would but deal with you as you have dealt with yourself. God has earnestly counselled you times without number to use your temporal enjoyments for your spiritual good, but you have refused to hearken to him, you have foolishly perverted them to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, you have voluntarily used what God has given you for your spiritual hurt to increase your guilt and wound your own soul; and therefore if God's curse should attend them, so that they should all turn to the ruin of your soul, you would but be dealt with as you have dealt with yourself.

3. How just would it be in God to cut you off, and put an end to your life!

You have greatly abused the patience and long suffering of God which have already been exercised towards you. God with wonderful long suffering has borne with you, when you have gone on in rebellion against him, and refused to turn from your evil ways. He has beheld you going on obstinately in the ways of provocation against him, and yet he has not let loose his wrath against you to destroy you, but has still waited to be gracious. He has suffered you yet to live on his earth, and breathe his air; he has upheld and preserved you, and continued still to feed you, and clothe you, and maintain you, and still to give you a space to repent; but instead of being the better for his patience, you have been the worse, instead of being melted by it, you have been hardened, and it has made you the more presumptuous in sin. Eccles. viii. 11. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil." You have been guilty of despising the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long suffering, instead of being led to repent by it. You cannot live one day but as God maintains and provides for you; you cannot draw a breath, or live a moment, unless God upholds you; for in his hand your breath is, and he holds your soul in life, and his visitation preserves your spirit. But what thanks has God had for it; how have you, instead of being turned to God, been only rendered the more fully set and dreadfully hardened in the ways of sin! How just therefore would it be if God's patience should soon be at an end, and he should cease to bear with you any longer!

You have not only abused his past patience, but have also abused his thoughts of future patience. You have flattered yourself that death was not near, and that you should live long in the world, and this has made you abundantly the more bold in sin. Since therefore such has been the use you have made of your expectation of having your life preserved, how just would it be in

God to disappoint that expectation, and cut you short of that long life with which you have flattered yourself, and in the thoughts of which you have encouraged yourself in sin against him! How just would it be if your breath should soon be stopped, and that suddenly, when you think not of it, and you should be driven away in your wickedness!

3. As long as you live in sin you do but cumber the ground, you are wholly unprofitable, and live in vain. He, that refuses to live to the glory of God, does not answer the end of his creation, and for what should he live? God made men to serve him; to this end he gave them life; and if they will not devote their lives to this end, how just would it be in God if he should refuse to continue their lives any longer! He has planted you in his vineyard, to bear fruit; and if you bring forth no fruit, why should he continue you any longer; how just would it be in him to cut you down!

As long as you live many of the blessings of God are spent upon you from day to day; you devour the fruits of the earth and consume much of its fatness and sweetness; and all to no purpose, but to keep you alive to sin against God, and spend all in wickedness. The whole creation does as it were groan with you; the sun rises and sets to give you light, the clouds pour down rain upon you, and the earth brings forth her fruits, and labours from year to year to supply you; and you in the mean time do not answer the end of Him who has created all things. How just therefore would it be if God should soon cut you off, and take you away, and deliver the earth from this burden, that the creation may no longer groan with you, and cast you out as an abominable branch! Luke xiii. 7. "Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground?" John xv. 2 and 6. "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit—If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

4. How just would it be if you should die in the greatest horror and amazement!

How often have you been exhorted to improve your time, to lay a foundation of peace and comfort on a death-bed; and yet you have refused to hearken! You have been many and many a time reminded that you must die, that it was very uncertain when, and that you did not know how soon, and have been told how mean and insignificant all your earthly enjoyments would then appear, and how unable to afford you any comfort on a death-bed. You have been often told how dreadful it would be to lie on a death-bed in a Christless state, having nothing to comfort you but your

worldly enjoyments. You have been often put in mind of the torment and amazement which sinners, who have mis-spent their precious time are subject to when arrested by death. You have been told how infinitely you would then need to have God your friend, and to have the testimony of a good conscience, and a well grounded hope of future blessedness. And how often have you been exhorted to take care to provide against such a day as this, and to lay up treasure in heaven, that you might have something to depend on when you parted from all this world, something to hope for when all things here below fail! But remember how regardless you have been, how dull and negligent from time to time, when you have sat under the hearing of such things, and still you obstinately refuse to prepare for death, and take no care to lay a good foundation against that time. And you have not only been counselled, but you have seen others on their death-beds in fear and distress, or have heard of them, and have not taken warning; yea, some of you have been sick yourselves, and have been afraid that you were on your death-beds, yet God was merciful to you, and restored you, but you did not take warning to prepare for death. How justly therefore might you be the subject of that horror and amazement, of which you have heard, when you come to die!

And not only so, but how industriously have you spent your time in treasuring up matter for tribulation and anguish at that time! You have not only been negligent of laying a foundation for peace and comfort then, but have spent your time continually and unweariedly in laying a foundation for distress and horror. How have you gone on from day to day, heaping up more and more guilt; more and more wounding your own conscience, still increasing the amount of folly and wickedness for you to reflect upon! How just therefore would it be that tribulation and anguish should then come upon you!

5. How just it is that you should suffer the wrath of God in another world.

Because you have wilfully provoked, and stirred up that wrath. If you are not willing to suffer the anger of God, then why did you provoke him to anger? why did you act as though you would contrive to make him angry with you? why did you wilfully disobey God? You know that wilful disobedience tends to provoke him, who is disobeyed: it is so in an earthly king, or master, or father. If you have a servant who is wilfully disobedient, it provokes your anger. And again, if you would not suffer God's wrath, why have you so often cast a slight on God? If any one casts a slight on men, it tends to provoke them: how much more may the Infinite Majesty of heaven be provoked, when he is contemned! You have also robbed God of his property, you have refused to give

him that which is his own. It provokes men when they are deprived of their due and they are dealt injuriously by; how much more may God be provoked when you rob him!

You have also slighted the kindness of God to you, and that the greatest love and kindness of which you can conceive. You have been supremely ungrateful and have only abused that kindness. Nothing provokes men more than to have their kindness slighted and abused; how much more may God be provoked when men requite his infinite mercy only with disobedience and ingratitude! If therefore you go on to provoke God, and to stir up his wrath, how can you expect any other than to suffer his wrath? If then you should indeed suffer the wrath of an offended God, remember it is what you have procured for yourself, it is a fire of your own kindling.

You would not accept of deliverance from God's wrath, when it has been offered to you. When God had in mercy sent his only begotten Son into the world, you refused to admit him. You loved your sins too well to forsake them to come to Christ, and for the sake of your sins, you have rejected all the offers of a Saviour, so that you have chosen death rather than life. After you had procured wrath to yourself you clove fast to it, and would not part with it for mercy. "All they that hate me, love death."

6. How just would it be that you be delivered up into the hands of the devil and his angels, to be tormented by them hereafter, seeing you have voluntarily given yourself up to serve them here! You have hearkened to them rather than to God. How just therefore would it be if God leave you to them! You have followed Satan and adhered to his interest in opposition to God, and have subjected yourself to his will in this world, rather than to the will of God; how just therefore would it be if God should give you up to his will hereafter!

7. How justly may your bodies be made organs of torment to you hereafter, which you have made organs and instruments of sin in this world! You have given up your bodies a sacrifice to sin and Satan: how justly therefore may God give them up a sacrifice to wrath! You have employed your bodies as servants to your vile and hateful lusts. How just therefore would it be for God hereafter to raise your bodies to be organs and instruments of misery; and to fill them as full of torment as they have been filled full of sin!

8. But the greatest objection of wicked men against the justice of the future punishment which God has threatened, is from the greatness of that punishment: that God should inflict upon the finally impenitent, torments so extreme, so amazingly dreadful, to have their bodies cast into a furnace of fire of such immense heat and fierceness, there to lie unconsumed, and yet full of sense and

feeling, glowing within and without; and the soul full of yet more dreadful horror and torment; and so to remain without any remedy or rest for ever, and ever, and ever. And, therefore, I would mention several things to you, to show how justly you lie exposed to so dreadful a punishment.

1. This punishment, as dreadful as it is, is not more so than the Being is great and glorious against whom you have sinned. It is true this punishment is dreadful beyond all expression or conception, and so is the greatness and gloriousness of God as much beyond all expression or conception; and yet you have continued to sin against him, yea, you have been bold and presumptuous in your sins, and have multiplied transgressions against him without end. The wrath of God that you have heard of, dreadful as it is, is not more dreadful than that Majesty which you have despised and trampled on is awful. This punishment is indeed enough to fill one with horror barely to think of it, and so it would fill you with at least equal horror to think of sinning so exceedingly against so great and glorious a God, if you conceived of it aright. Jer. ii. 12, 13. "Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord: For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters; and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water!" God's being so infinitely great and excellent, has not influenced you not to sin against him, but you have done it boldly, and made nothing of it thousands of times; and why should this misery, being so infinitely great and dreadful, hinder God from inflicting it on you? 1 Sam. ii. 25. "If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?"

2. Your nature is not more averse from such misery as you have heard of, than God's nature is averse from such sin as you have been guilty of. The nature of man is very averse from pain and torment, and especially it is exceedingly averse from such dreadful and eternal torment; but yet that does not hinder but that it is just that it should be inflicted, for men do not hate misery more than God hates sin. God is so holy, and is of so pure a nature, that he has an infinite aversion to sin; but yet you have made light of sin, and your sins have been exceedingly multiplied and enhanced. The consideration of God's hating of it has not at all hindered you from committing it; why, therefore, should the consideration of your hating misery hinder God from bringing it upon you? God represents himself in his word as burdened and wearied with the sins of wicked men: Isaiah i. 14. "Your new moons and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear

them;" Mal. ii. 17. "Ye have wearied the Lord with your words: yet ye say, Wherein have we wearied him? When ye say, Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and he delighteth in them; or, Where is the God of judgment?"

3. You have not cared how much God's honour suffered; and why should God be careful lest your misery be great? You have been told how much these, and those things which you have practised, were to the dishonour of God; yet you did not care for that, but went on still multiplying transgressions. The consideration that the more you sinned, the more God was dishonoured, did not in the least restrain you. If it had not been for fear of God's displeasure, you would not have cared though you had dishonoured him ten thousand times as much as you did. As for any respect you had to God, you did not care what became of God's honour, nor of his happiness neither, no, nor of his being. Why then is God obliged to be careful how much you suffer? Why should he be careful of your welfare, or use any caution lest he should lay more on you than you can bear?

4. As great as this wrath is, it is not greater than that love of God which you have slighted and rejected. God, in infinite mercy to lost sinners, has provided a way for them to escape future misery, and to obtain eternal life. For that end he has given his only begotten Son,[3] a person infinitely glorious and honourable in himself—being equal with God, and infinitely near and dear to God. It was ten thousand times more than if God had given all the angels in heaven, or the whole world for sinners. Him he gave to be incarnate, to suffer death, to be made a curse for us, and to undergo the dreadful wrath of God in our room, and thus to purchase for us eternal glory. This glorious person has been offered to you times without number, and he has stood and knocked at your door, till his hairs were wet with the dews of the night; but all that he has done has not won upon you; you see no form nor comeliness in him, no beauty that you should desire him. When he has thus offered himself to you as your Saviour, you never freely and heartily accept of him. This love which you have thus abused, is as great as that wrath of which you are in danger. If you would have accepted of it, you might have had the enjoyment of this love instead of enduring this terrible wrath: so that the misery you have heard of is not greater than the love you have despised, and the happiness and glory which you have rejected. How just then would it be in God to execute upon you this dreadful wrath, which is not greater than that love which you have despised! Heb. ii. 3. "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?"

5. If you complain of this punishment as being too great, then why has it not been great enough to deter you from sin? As great as it is, you have made nothing of it. When God threatened to inflict it on you, you did not mind his threatenings, but were bold to disobey him, and to do those very things for which he threatened this punishment. Great as this punishment is, it has not been great enough to keep you from living a wilfully wicked life, and going on in ways that you knew were evil. When you have been told that such and such things certainly exposed you to this punishment you did not abstain on that account, but went on from day to day in a most presumptuous manner, and God's threatening such a punishment was no effectual check upon you. Why therefore do you now complain of this punishment as too great, and quarrel against it, and say that God is unreasonable and cruel to inflict it? In so saying you are condemned out of your own mouth; for if it be so dreadful a punishment, and more than is just, then why was it not great enough at least to restrain you from wilful sinning? Luke xix. 21, &c. "I feared thee, because thou art an austere man, thou takest up that thou laidest not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he said unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant," &c. You complain of this punishment as too great: but yet you have acted as if it was not great enough, and you have made light of it. If the punishment is too great, why have you gone on to make it still greater? You have gone on from day to day, to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, to add to your punishment, and increase it exceedingly; and yet now you complain of it as too great, as though God could not justly inflict so great a punishment. How absurd and self-contradictory is the conduct of such an one, who complains of God for making his punishment too great, and yet from day to day industriously gathers and heaps up fuel, to make the fire the greater!

6. You have no cause to complain of the punishment being greater than is just; for you have many and many a time provoked God to do his worst. If you should forbid a servant to do a given thing, and threaten that if he did it you would inflict some very dreadful punishment upon him, and he should do it notwithstanding, and you should renew your command, and warn him in the most strict manner possible not to do it, and tell him you would surely punish him if he persisted, and should declare that his punishment should be exceedingly dreadful, and he should wholly disregard you, and should disobey you again, and you should continue to repeat your commands and warnings, still setting out the dreadfulness of the punishment, and he should still, without any regard to you, go

on again and again to disobey you to your face, and this immediately on your thus forbidding and threatening him: could you take it any otherwise than as daring you to do your worst? But thus have you done towards God; you have had his commands repeated, and his threatenings set before you hundreds of times, and have been most solemnly warned; yet have you notwithstanding gone on in ways which you knew were sinful, and have done the very things which he has forbidden, directly before his face. Job xv. 25, 26. "For he stretcheth out his hand against God, and strengtheneth himself against the Almighty. He runneth upon him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler." You have thus bid defiance to the Almighty, even when you saw the sword of his vindictive wrath uplifted, that it might fall upon your head. Will it, therefore, be any wonder if he shall make you know how terrible that wrath is, in your utter destruction?

SERMON VIII.

DECEMBER, 1740.

ROMANS ii. 10.

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good.

THE Apostle, having in the preceding verses declared what is the portion of wicked men; viz. indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; in this verse declares what is the portion assigned to good men. In the words of the text we should observe,

1. The description of a good man; viz. *the man that worketh good.* Such men are here described by the fruit which they bring forth. Christ has taught us that the tree is known by its fruit. Paul here describes them by that which most distinguishes them; not by the external privileges which they enjoy, or the light under which they live; but by the fruits which they bring forth. For as the Apostle says, in verse 13, "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of it shall be justified." That which distinguishes good men from bad, is not that they *hear* good, or that they *profess* good, or that they *intend* good; but that they *do* good. They are *workers* of good.

2. The reward of such a man; viz. "*glory, honour, and peace;*" in which are mentioned three sorts of good that are assigned to them as their portion. 1. Their moral good, expressed by the word *glory*. Glory shall be given them; i. e. they shall be made excellent and glorious. They shall be endued with those excellent and glorious qualifications, which will render them beautiful and lovely. They shall have the image of God, and be partakers of his holiness. Thus the word glory is used by St. Paul, 2 Cor. iii. 18, We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 2. Their relative good; *Honour.* They shall be in most honourable circumstances. They shall be advanced to great dignity, receive a relation to God, and Christ, and the heavenly inhabitants, and God shall put honour upon them. 3. Their natural good; *Peace:* which, as it is used in the scriptures, signifies happiness; and includes all comfort, joy and pleasure.

I shall endeavour to show from the text, that glory, honour, and peace are the portion which God has given to all good men. In describing their happiness, I shall consider the successive parts of it; both here and hereafter.

First. I propose to treat of their happiness in this world. Those who are truly good men have been the subjects of a real, thorough work of conversion, and have had their hearts turned from sin to God. Of such persons it may be said, that they are truly blessed. They are often pronounced blessed by God. He is infinitely wise, and sees and knows all things. He perfectly knows who are blessed, and who are miserable. He hath said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."—"Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven."—"Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust."—"Blessed are the poor in spirit"—"the meek"—"the merciful"—"the pure in heart."

In considering the happiness of the righteous in this world, I shall pursue the method which the text obviously points out, and shall consider, 1. The excellency; 2. The honour; and, 3. The peace and pleasure which God bestows upon them in the present life.

I. The excellency or glory. The sum of this consists in their having the image of God upon them. When a person is converted, he has the image of God instamped on him. Coloss. iii. 10. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him." And Ephes. iv. 23, 24: "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness." They have their eyes opened, and are led into such a sight of God and thorough acquaintance with him, as changes the soul into the image of God's glory.

What can render a creature more excellent than to have the very image of the Creator? and how blessed a change is that which is wrought in conversion, which brings a man thus to be in the image of God! For though the image of God in Christians in this world is very imperfect, yet it is real. The real image of God is most excellent, though it be imperfect.

Hence, "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," and "the saints are the excellent of the earth." The image of God is their glory, and it may well be called glory, for imperfect as it is, it renders them glorious in the eyes of the angels of heaven. The image of God is a greater beauty in their eyes than the brightness and glory of the sun in the firmament.

Indeed the saints have no excellency, as they are in and of themselves. In them, that is, in their flesh, dwells no good

thing. They are in themselves poor, guilty, vile creatures, and see themselves to be so; but they have an excellency and a glory in them, because they have Christ dwelling in them. The excellency that is in them, though it be but as a spark, yet it is something ten thousand times more excellent than any ruby or the most precious pearl that ever was found on the earth; and that because it is something divine, something of God.

This holy heavenly spark is put into the soul in conversion, and God maintains it there. All the powers of hell cannot put it out, for God will keep it alive, and it shall prevail more and more. Though it be but small, yet it is powerful; it has influence over the heart to govern it, and brings forth holy fruits in the life, and will not cease to prevail till it has consumed all the corruption that is left in the heart, and till it has turned the whole soul into a pure, holy, and heavenly flame, till the soul of man becomes like the angels, a flame of fire, and shines as the brightness of the firmament.

II. I would consider the honour to which Christians are advanced in this world; and the sum of this is, that they are the children of God. This is an excellent and glorious degree of honour and dignity to which they are admitted, and that because the Being to whom they are related is an infinitely glorious being, a being of incomprehensible majesty and excellency; and also because the relation is so near and honourable a relation. It is a great honour to be the servant of God. John the Baptist said of Christ, that he was not worthy to stoop down to loose the latchet of Christ's shoes. But Christians are not only admitted to be the servants of God, but his children; and how much more honourable in a family is the relation of children than that of servants! Gal. iv. 7. "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Rom. viii. 16, 17. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of Go; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." 1 John iii. 1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" The honour appears the greater if it be considered how Christians are brought into their relation to God; and that is by Christ. They become the children of God by virtue of their union with the only begotten and eternal Son of God; they are united to him as his spouse and members of his body, as his flesh and his bones, and as one spirit; and, therefore, as Christ is the Son of God, so they are sons; therefore are they joint heirs with Christ, because they are joint sons with him. To this end God sent forth his Son, that

so they might through him also be sons. Gal. iv. 4, 5. "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And therefore they, partaking of the relation of the Son, so are they also of the spirit of the Son; as it follows in the next verse, "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Herein Christians are the children of God in a more honourable way than the angels themselves; for the angels are the sons of God by virtue of that relation which they have to God, as they are in themselves singly and separately. But Christians are the children of God, as partaking with Christ, the only begotten Son, in his sonship, whose sonship is immensely more honourable than that of the angels. And Christians, being the children of God, are honoured of God as such. They are sometimes owned as such by the inward testimony of the Spirit of God. For, as it is found in the verse already cited from Romans, "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." They are treated as such in the great value God puts upon them, for they are his jewels, those which he has set apart for himself; and he is tender of them as of the apple of his eye. He disregards wicked men in comparison of them. He will give kings for them and princes for their life. He is jealous for them. He is very angry with those that hurt them. If any offend them, it were better for them that a mill-stone were cast about their neck, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea. He loves them with a very great and wonderful love. He pities them as a father pities his children. He will protect them, and defend them, and provide for them, as a father provides for his children. This honour have all they that fear and love God, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Peace and pleasure are also the portion of Christians in this world. Their peace and joy in God begin in the present life, and are no less excellent than the glory with which he invests them, and the honour to which he advances them. We ought here to consider, 1. What foundation they have for peace and joy. 2. What peace and joy they actually have.

1st. Their foundation for peace and joy is in their safety and their riches.

1. They have ground for peace because of their safety. They are safe in Jesus Christ from the wrath of God and from the power of Satan. They that are in Christ shall never perish, for none shall pluck them out of his hand. They are delivered from all their dreadful misery, that indignation and wrath, tri-

bulation and anguish, which shall come on ungodly men. They were naturally exposed to it, but they are delivered from it; their sins are all forgiven them. The hand-writing is eternally blotted out. Their sins are all done away; God has cast them behind his back, and buried their sorrows in the depths of the sea, and they shall no more come into remembrance. They are most safe from misery, for they are built on Christ their everlasting rock. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God. They have the faithful promise of God for their security, that is established as a sure witness in heaven. They have an interest in that covenant, that is well ordered in all things and sure. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus."

2. They have a foundation of unspeakable comfort and joy, because of their riches. They have true and infinite riches. They are the possessors and heirs of something real and substantial, and that is worthy to be called by the name of riches. The things they possess are excellent, more precious than gold and than rubies; all the desirable things of this world cannot equal them, and they have enough of it. The riches that they have given them of God are inexhaustible. It is sufficient for them; there is no end of it. They have a fountain of infinite good for their comfort, and contentment, and joy; for God has given himself to them to be their portion, and he is a God of infinite glory. There is glory in him to engage their contemplation for ever and ever, without ever being satiated. And he is also an infinite fountain of love; for God is love, yea, an ocean of love without shore or bottom! The glorious Son of God is theirs; that lovely one, who was from all eternity; God's delight, rejoicing always before him. All his beauty is their portion, and his dying love is theirs, his very heart is theirs, and his glory and happiness in heaven are theirs, so far as their capacity will allow them to partake of it; for he has promised it to them, and has taken possession of it in their name. And the saints are also rich in the principle that is in them. They have inward riches which they carry about with them in their own hearts. They are rich in faith. James ii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" They have the grace of God in their hearts, which is a most excellent treasure, and a good foundation of joy; for it is the seed of joy. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. And the seed that is sown in their hearts, is the grace of God there. That is a seed that however it

lies hid, will certainly in due time spring up, and put forth itself, and will bud, and blossom, and will bring forth rich fruit. These riches are the true riches. This is that good which God reserves for his friends. God distributes silver and gold and such like things among his enemies, because he slights them and regards them not. They are contemptible things in his eyes, as we throw husks to swine. But he has reserved better things for his children, of which no ungodly man, though a prince or monarch, shall partake. This is the ground which Christians have of peace and pleasure in this world. However, the saints cannot always take comfort, and do not always taste the sweetness that there is in store for them, by reason of the darkness and clouds that sometimes interpose. But though they may walk in great darkness for a long time, yet they are happy notwithstanding.

2d. They sometimes in this world have the actual enjoyment of peace and pleasure that are most excellent. Sometimes the clouds that are in the way are removed and Christians are enabled to behold the ground they have for rejoicing. Though God's glory and love be often hid from them, as it were with a vail, or at least, so as to hinder a clear view of it, yet God sometimes is pleased to remove the vail, to draw the curtain, and to give the saints sweet visions. Sometimes there is, as it were, a window opened in heaven, and Christ shows himself through the lattice; they have sometimes a beam of sweet light breaking forth from above into the soul; and God and the Redeemer sometimes come to them, and make friendly visits to them, and manifest themselves to them. Sometimes Christians have seasons of light and gladness for some considerable period, and at other times their views are more transient. Sometimes their light and joy arise in reading of the holy scriptures, sometimes in hearing the word preached, sometimes at the Lord's table, sometimes in the duty of prayer, sometimes in Christian conference, sometimes in meditation when they are about their occupations, as in the time of more set and solemn meditations; and sometimes in the watches of the night.

Those spiritual joys and pleasures which believers possess in this world, are chiefly of three sorts.

1. The joy which they have in a sense of their own good estate; in the sense they have of the pardon of their sins, and their safety from hell; and a sense of the favour of God, and in the hope they have of eternal life.

2. The joy and delight which they have in the apprehension and view of God's excellency and love. The joy of a Christian does not consist merely in the sense of his own good estate, as natural men often are ready to imagine; but there is an excellent, transcendent, soul-satisfying sweetness that sometimes fills the soul in the apprehension of the excellency of God. The soul

dwells upon the thought, fixes on it, and takes complacence in God as the greatest good, the most delightful object of its contemplation. This pleasure is the sweetest pleasure that a Christian ever feels, and is the foretaste of the pleasures of heaven itself. Herein sometimes the saints do boast of the clusters of Canaan. This sort of joy is evidence of sincerity above any other joy, a more sure evidence than a rejoicing in our own good estate. From the joy which the Christian has in the view of the glory and excellency of God; the consideration of the love of God to him cannot be excluded. When he rejoices in God as a glorious God, he rejoices in him the more because he is his God, and in consideration of there being an union between him and this God; otherwise, if there were a separation, the view of God's excellency, though it would raise joy one way, would proportionally excite grief another. God is sometimes pleased to manifest his love to the saints, and commonly at those times, when a Christian has the greatest views of God's excellency, he has also of his love; the soul is spiritually sensible of God as being present with it, and as manifesting and communicating himself; and it has sweet communion with God, and tastes the sweetness of his love, and knows a little what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of that love which passeth knowledge.

3. The third kind of joy is found in doing that which is to the glory of God. The true love of God makes this sweet and delightful to the soul. The joy of a Christian not only arises in knowing and viewing, but also in doing; not only in apprehending God, but also in doing for God. For he loves God not only with a love of complacence, but a love of benevolence also; and as a love of complacence delights in beholding, so does a love of benevolence delight in doing for, the object beloved. The peace and pleasure which the Christian has in these things, is far better and more desirable than the pleasures that this world can afford, and especially than the pleasures of wicked men, and that on the following accounts.

1. There is Light in this pleasure. The peace and pleasures of wicked men have their foundation in darkness. When wicked men have any quietness or joy, it is because they are blind and do not see what is their real condition. If it were not for blindness and delusion, they could have no peace nor comfort in any thing. There needs nothing but to open a wicked man's eyes, and let him look about him and see where he is, and it would be enough to destroy all the quietness and comfort of the most prosperous wicked man in the world. But on the contrary, the peace of a godly man, is a peace that arises from light; when he sees things most as they are, then he has most peace; and the distress and trouble which he sometimes feels, arise from clouds and darkness. When

a godly man is in the greatest fear and distress, if he did not know what a happy state he were in, he would at the same time rejoice with unspeakable joy; so that his pleasure is not founded, like that of wicked men, in stupidity, but in sensibleness; not in blindness, but in light, and sight, and knowledge.

2. There is Rest in this pleasure. He that has found this joy, finds a sweet repose and acquiescence of the soul in it. It sweetly calms the soul and allays its disappointments. Christ says, Matth. xi. 28, "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is a sweet contentment in it; the soul that tastes it, desires no better pleasure. There is a satisfaction in it. The soul that has been wandering before, when it comes to taste of this fountain, finds in it that which satisfies its desires and cravings, and discovers that in it which it needs in order to its happiness. John iv. 14. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst: but the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." It is quite otherwise with the pleasures of ungodly men. There is no true rest in them, they are not enjoyed with inward quietness, there is no true peace enjoyed within, neither do they afford contentment. But those wicked men that have the most worldly pleasures, are yet restlessly inquiring, "Who will show us any good?" "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Wicked men in the midst of their enjoyment of pleasure have no true rest, neither do their reflections on it afford rest; but only remorse of conscience, and disquietude of soul, under the guilt that is contracted. But the pleasures of the godly afford rest in the enjoyment, and rest and sweetness in the reflection; it oftentimes calms and refreshes the soul to look on past comforts.

3. There is Life in it. It is a pleasure that strengthens and nourishes and preserves the soul, and gives it life, and does not corrupt and destroy and bring it to death, as do sinful pleasures. The pleasures of the wicked are poison to the soul, they tend to enfeeble it, to consume it; and kill it. But the pleasures of the godly feed the soul, and do not consume it; they strengthen, and do not weaken it; they exalt, and do not debase it; they enrich, and do not impoverish it. Death and corruption are the natural fruit of the pleasures of sin, but life is the fruit of spiritual pleasures. Gal. vi. 8. "For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting." The life in which this joy consists and to which it tends, is the most excellent life, and the only life worthy of the name; it is spiritual, and the beginning of eternal life: this pleasure is a fountain springing up to everlasting life. John iv. 14.

4. There is Substance in it. This pleasure is not a mere shadow, an empty delight, as earthly pleasures are, but it is substantial joy. The pleasures of sin last but a little season, they are the crackling of thorns under a pot, or as the blazing meteors of the night, that appear for a moment, and then vanish. But this pleasure is like the durable light of the stars or the sun. Worldly pleasures are easily overthrown; a little thing will spoil all the pleasures of a king's court. Haman, in the midst of all his prosperity and greatness, could say, "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." But the joys of the saints are such as the changes of time cannot overthrow. If God lifts up the light of his countenance, this will compose and rejoice the heart under the saddest tidings. They joy in affliction. Their enemies cannot overthrow this joy; the devil and even death itself cannot overthrow it; but oftentimes it lives, and is in its greatest height, in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death. When in the most tormenting death, how often have the martyrs sung in the midst of the flames, and under the hands of their cruel tormentors! Job xxxv. 10. "But none saith, where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."

5. There is Holiness in it. It is the excellency of these joys that they are holy joys. They are not like the polluted stream of sinful pleasures, but they are pure and holy. Rev. xxii. 1. "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb." These pleasures do not defile the soul, but purify it; they do not deform, but beautify it; they not only greatly delight the soul, but render it more excellent; they impart something more of God, more of a divine disposition and temper, dispose to holy actions, and cause the soul to shine as Moses' face did when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and as Stephen's face, which was as the face of an angel, when he saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Thus these pleasures make the soul more excellent, and more divine, as well as more happy.

6. There is sometimes Glory in it. God sometimes unvails his face, and lets in light more plentifully. This is a delight and joy, the excellency, and sweetness, and admirableness of which cannot be expressed. It is a kind of glory that fills the soul. So excellent is its nature, that the sweetest earthly delight vanishes into nothing, and appears as base and vile as dross and dirt, or as the mere mire of the street. It is bright above all that is earthly, as the sun is brighter than the glow-worm. Of this, the apostle takes notice. 1 Peter i. 8. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him

not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

Secondly. I proceed to consider the happiness of the saints in Death. It may seem a mystery to the world that men should be happy in death, which the world looks upon as the most terrible of all things; but thus it is to the saints. Their happiness is built upon a rock, and it will stand the shock of death: when the storm and floods of death come with their greatest violence, it stands firm, and neither death nor hell can overthrow it. Here,

1. Death is rendered no death to them. It is not worthy of the name of death. As the life of a wicked man is not worthy of the name of life, so the death of a godly man is not worthy of the name of death. It is not looked upon as any death at all in the eyes of God, who sees all things as they are, nor is it called death by him. Hence Christ promises, that those who believe in him shall not die. John vi. 50, 51. "This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." It is no death to the saints, because it is no destruction to them. The notion of death implies destruction, or perishing in it; but the godly are not destroyed by death, death cannot destroy them; for as Christ says, they shall never perish. John iii. 15. "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." A godly man, when he dies, in no wise perishes. There is no end put to his life as a Christian, for that is a spiritual life that remains unquenched by death. A wicked man, when he dies, dies indeed, because then an end is put to all the life which he has; for he has no other life but temporal life; but the life of a Christian is hid with Christ, and safely laid up with him in heaven; and therefore death cannot reach his life, because it cannot reach heaven. Death can no more reach the believer's life than Christ's life. No death can reach Christ our life now, though he died once: but now he has for ever sat down at the right hand of God. He says, for the comfort of his saints, Rev. i. 18, "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Death not only cannot destroy a Christian, but it cannot hurt him; Christ carries him on eagle wings aloft on high, out of the reach of death. Death, with respect to him, is disarmed of his power: and every Christian may say, "O death, where is thy sting?" Death was once indeed a terrible enemy, but now he has become weak. He spent all his strength on

Christ; in killing him, he killed himself; he was conquered then, and has now no power to hurt his followers. Death is now but the shadow of what he would have been if Christ had not conquered him; he was once a lion, but now he is but a lamb. A good man may indeed be harassed with fears of death, and may be much terrified when going through the valley of the shadow of death, but that is no just ground of any terror, and if the saints are terrified, it is only through their infirmity and darkness. As a child is frightened in the dark where there is no danger, because he is a child, so a good man may be affrighted at the terrible looks of death. But he will find this awful appearance to be only a shadow, that can look terribly, but can do nothing terrible. Death may, through the weakness of the saints, trouble them, and exercise them, but he cannot destroy the ground they have for comfort and support. When death comes to a wicked man, all those things on which he built his comfort fail, their foundation is overflown with a flood. Job xxii. 16. But the foundation of the peace and comfort of the godly man is not shaken at such a time. Oftentimes the saints are actually carried above all the fears and terrors of death; they see that it is but a shadow, and are not afraid: not only their foundation of comfort remains, but that peace and comfort itself is undisturbed, the light shines through the darkness, and the lamb-like nature of death appears through the shadow of the lion. The godly have a God to stand by them when they come to die, in whose love and favour they may shelter themselves, in whose favour is life, yea life in death; and they have a blessed Saviour to be with them, to uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness. These are the friends they have with them, when they are going to take their leave of all earthly friends. God will be with them when their flesh and heart fails; God will be the strength of their heart, when they are weak and faint, and nature fails. God will put underneath his everlasting arms to support them, and will make all their bed for them in their sickness. Ps. xxxvii. 37. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

2. Death is not only no death to them, but it is a translation to a more glorious life, and is turned into a kind of resurrection from the dead. Death is a happy change to them, and a change that is by far more like a resurrection than a death. It is a change from a state of much sin, and sorrow, and darkness, to a state of perfect light, and holiness, and joy. When a saint dies, he awakes, as it were, out of sleep. This life is a dull lifeless state; there is but a little spiritual life, and a great deal of deadness; there is but a little light and a great deal of

darkness; there is but a little sense, and a great deal of stupidity and senselessness. But when a godly man dies, all this deadness, and darkness, and stupidity, and senselessness are gone for ever, and he enters immediately into a state of perfect life and perfect light, and activity and joyfulness. A man's conversion is compared to a resurrection, because then a man rises from spiritual death. Eph. ii. 1. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." But though spiritual life is then begun, yet there are great remains of spiritual death after this, and but little life. But when a godly man dies, he rises from all remains of spiritual death, and comes into a state of perfect life. This body is like a prison to the holy soul, it exceedingly clogs, and hinders, and cramps it in its spiritual exercises and comforts. But when a saint dies the soul is released from this prison, this grave, and comes into a state of glorious freedom and happiness. So that death is not only deprived of his sting, but is made a servant to the saints, to bring them to Christ in heaven, who is their life. And their ground of comfort does not only last when they are going out of the world, but it is in some respects increased, for then their perfect happiness draws nigh. It is "far better" to depart and be with Christ, than to continue here. And when the saints are enabled to see their own happiness in death, they are enabled exceedingly to rejoice in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, and to triumph joyfully over the king of terrors. Death to the saints is always a passage or avenue, leading out of a world of vanity, and sin, and misery, into a world of life, light, and glory; but though often a dark avenue, it is at times full of light, the darkness all vanishes away, and the light shines out of that glorious city into which they are entering. It shines through the darkness and fills the soul, and the clouds of death vanish before it. The awful appearance of death is but a mask or disguise that death wears. It is not terrible but joyful in reality, and this light of the new Jerusalem sometimes so clearly shines that it shines through the frightful disguise, and shows the saints that death is but a servant. Yea, sometimes it is so when death has on its most terrible disguise that ever it wears, and comes in its most dreadful forms, as when the saints are burnt at the stake, and put to all cruel and tormenting deaths. It is oftentimes joyful to the saints when dying, to think that they are now going into the glorious presence of God, to enjoy God and Christ to the full. The joyful expectation sometimes makes them ready to cry out, "Even so, come Lord Jesus, come quickly!" and, "Why is his chariot so long in coming?"

Thirdly. Let us next consider the happiness of the saints, in their state of Separation from the Body.

1. When the soul departs from the body, it is received by the blessed angels and conducted by them to the third heavens. On the eve of its departure there is a guard of angels standing round the dying bed; and the devils, though eager to seize upon it as their prey, shall by no means be suffered to come nigh. The holy angels shall be a guard to the soul, to keep off all its enemies. We are taught that this is part of the office in which God employs them. Psalm xxxiv. 7. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm xci. 11. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways;" as it was with Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel vi. 22. "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." And as soon as the soul is loose from the body, it shall be kindly and courteously received by those bright and blessed ones, to be conducted by them into Christ's glorious presence; for the angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation. This is one way in which they shall minister; viz. to guard and conduct the departed spirits of the saints; which we are plainly taught in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Luke xvi. 22. "And it came to pass that the beggar died and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." These spirits of holiness and love, when they have received the soul, shall conduct it along through the aerial and starry heavens to the most glorious part of the universe; the highest part of the creation, the place of God's most holy residence, the city and palace of the most high God, where Christ is. There are some who say that there is no such place as heaven; but this is evidently a mistake, for the heaven, into which the man Christ Jesus entered with his glorified body, is certainly some place. It is absurd to suppose that the heaven where the body of Christ is, is not a place. To say that the body of Christ is in no place, is the same thing as to say he has no body. The heaven where Christ is, is a place; for he was seen ascending, and will be seen descending again; and the heaven where the departed souls of the saints are, is the same heaven where Christ has ascended. And therefore Stephen, when he was departing this life, saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And he prayed to that same Jesus whom he saw, that he would receive his spirit; i. e. that he would receive it to him, where he saw him, at the right hand of God. And the apostle Paul signifies, that if he should depart, he should be with Christ. Philip. i. 23.

"For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better:" 2 Cor. v. 8. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Besides there are some of the saints there already with their bodies, as Enoch and Elijah. Therefore there is some place, where God gloriously manifests himself, and where Christ is, and where saints and angels dwell, and whither the angels carry the souls of the saints when they depart from their bodies; and this place is called Paradise, and the third heaven. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 4. The aerial heaven is the first heaven; the starry heaven is the second; and the blessed abode of Christ and saints and angels the third, because it is above the other two; and so Christ is said to be made higher than the heavens. Heb. vii. 26. "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," i. e. higher than the visible heaven. This heaven is far above the stars. So it is said that Christ ascended far above all heavens. Eph. iv. 10. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," i. e. far above all the heaven that we see. This is the mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and hither the angels conduct the souls of the saints when they leave their earthly tabernacles. When they come there, they shall be received with a joyful welcome, the doors of this glorious city are opened to them, and they shall have entrance given to them into heaven, as an inheritance to which they have a right. Rev. xxii. 14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And then shall open to view that glorious world, that beautiful city, and delightful Paradise, which they had often before heard of, and thought of, and desired: then they shall see it, and possess it as their own. There they shall be welcomed and joyfully received by that glorious company that dwell there, by the angels, and by the saints that went to heaven before them. There was joy among them at their conversion, and now also will there be joy among them when they are brought home to glory. To have one that was dear to them before, because a child of the same family and a disciple of the same Lord, brought home from a strange country to come and dwell with them for ever; how will their fellow-citizens and brethren in heaven be glad for them, and rejoice with them, and embrace them, when they come there to join them in their praises of God and the Lamb! And then they shall be conducted unto the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory, and shall be presented to him perfectly free from sin, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; who will also abundantly welcome them to his glory, and to the blessed enjoy-

ing of his love. And then shall their good Shepherd rejoice, when he shall not only have brought home the soul that was lost to a saving close with him, but home to him in his heavenly father's house. The Saviour shall then rejoice when he shall receive a soul that he loved before the foundation of the world; and for which he laid down his life, and endured such dreadful sufferings. This was the joy that was set before him, to redeem and make happy the souls of his elect; and he will rejoice, therefore, when he sees this accomplished. He will bid them welcome, and make them welcome, and they shall be received into the full enjoyment of his love. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and he shall present them also to God his father, having redeemed them to him by his blood, who shall also abundantly welcome them there. Then the soul shall behold that glory, and taste that pleasure which it long hoped for, and thought of with delight, and the thoughts of which were wont to be such a support to it when on earth; then shall it know by experience what the joys of heaven are; then shall the great and precious promises of the gospel be fulfilled; then shall faith be turned into vision, and hope into fruition; then shall all sin be eternally left behind; there shall be no more indwelling corruption, wicked thoughts, or sinful dispositions, to torment them. And whatever sorrow and affliction they underwent on earth, God shall now wipe away all tears from their eyes; and though they have lately passed through death, yet there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things shall be passed away. Rev. xxi. 4. If they have lived hardly in this world, and suffered hunger and thirst, there shall be an end of it all; and they that have suffered persecution, and have had their raiment stained with their own blood, shall now suffer no more. "And he said unto me, these are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb, which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. vii. 14, 15, 16, 17. Though they had many enemies to conflict with while on earth, yet now shall they obtain the victory over them; now shall they triumph and sing, being for ever out of the reach of all Satan's temptations, and of all his power to afflict or molest them; now shall they appear in mount Zion with the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. Rev. vii. 9.

3. They shall remain there in a state of exceeding glory and blessedness, till the resurrection. They shall remain there in the enjoyment of God, dwelling with Jesus Christ in a state of perfect rest, without the least disturbance or molestation. Rev. iv. 13. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." There they shall dwell in habitations of sweet delight and pleasure in Paradise; there they shall drink of those rivers of pleasures for evermore; there they shall dwell in perfect light and perfect love; there they shall see and converse with God and Christ, and with angels and glorious spirits, and shall contemplate the wonderful love of God to men in sending his only Son; there shall they contemplate the glorious love of God to them, the love he had to them before the foundation of the world. There shall they see and know what love Christ had to them, that influenced him to lay down his life for them; and shall behold the beauty and excellency of Christ, and see face to face, and know even as they are known. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. There they shall sweetly meditate on the wonderful dealings of God to them while in this lower world, in preserving of them, in granting to them to live under means of grace, when many thousands and millions of others never had these privileges. They shall contemplate the wonderful mercy of God to them in striving with them by his spirit, in convincing them of sin, in stirring them up to seek salvation, in converting them, and in bringing them out of darkness into marvellous light. The mercy and grace of God in converting them will then appear otherwise to them than it does now. They shall then contemplate the manifold mercies of God to them through the whole course of their lives; they shall see how God has protected them, and guided them by his counsel and led them all along; they shall see the wonderful wisdom and mercy of God towards them in these and those dispensations, that now appear most dark to them, shall see the meaning of those that were matter of difficulty to them, and shall see how all things wrought together for their good. These will be sweet meditations to them, and doubtless will be subjects of the saints' conversation with each other. How sweet will it be for the saints to look back and see how God carried them along through the wilderness, through all the storms of this world, and all its dangers, and temptations, and enemies, after they have come to their resting place; and how sweet will it be for them to converse together of these things, and what ardent praises will it occasion! and then also shall they see the wisdom of God in the government and ordering of the affairs of his church all along, the scheme of divine providence shall be opened to them, and the admirable wisdom of it shall be unfolded; and they

shall also see how God brings his purposes and promises to pass in his providence towards his church here on earth; they shall see and rejoice at it when the kingdom of God flourishes in the world. We are told, there is joy in heaven if but one sinner repenteth. Then doubtless the saints of the old testament after their entrance into heaven, saw and rejoiced when Christ came into the world; and therefore two of them, Moses and Elijah, came down to converse with Christ, at his transfiguration. Abraham, Moses, and David, and the prophets Isaiah and Daniel, and all the prophets, doubtless saw the fulfilment of the glorious things foretold in their prophecies with exceeding rejoicing. They saw that glorious enlargement of the church that was produced by the preaching of the prophets. And thus also the apostles and evangelists in heaven, and other primitive Christians and martyrs, saw the glorious flourishing and prevailing of the kingdom of Christ after their death, till the utter downfal of heathenism and the establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman empire.

The holy martyrs with joy beheld the destruction of those pagan powers that persecuted the church of God. Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11. "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Therefore they rejoiced when they saw it accomplished. And so the saints that died in former ages, they without doubt beheld and rejoiced greatly at the time of the resurrection from popery in the days of Luther and Calvin, and other reformers. And so doubtless the saints that went to heaven, before this remarkable out-pouring of the spirit on this town and other neighbouring towns, especially those that went to heaven from hence, have seen this work and greatly rejoiced at it. And so the saints, that die before the glorious days that are coming at the downfal of anti-christ and the calling of the Jews, will rejoice at the conversion of the world to Christianity. We are ready to lament that we shall not probably live to see those times. But if we die and go to heaven, we shall see them nevertheless, and rejoice in them not the less for not being in this world; but we shall rejoice more, for we shall see and understand more of the glory of God in such a work, and have more love to God, and therefore shall rejoice more at the advancement of his kingdom. Thus when the apostle John had visions of the glorious things that should be brought to pass for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, he

from time to time mentions the visions he also had of the hosts of heaven rejoicing at it. Rev. xi. 15, 16, 17. "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, we give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned." So when the spiritual Babylon, the church of Rome falls, the holy apostles and prophets, though dead many ages before, are called upon to rejoice. Rev. xviii. 20. "Rejoice over her, thou heavens, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." So the multitude of the heavenly hosts are described as rejoicing, and as singing hallelujahs on that occasion; and all heaven is full of praise. Rev. xix. 1. "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: For true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, alleluia. And her smoke went up for ever and ever." These things may give us some notion how the spirits of just men made perfect do employ themselves.

4. They remain in a joyful expectation of their more full and complete blessedness at the resurrection. As the wicked have not their full punishment until after the resurrection, so neither have the saints their complete happiness. Though they have attained to such exceeding glory, yet they are not yet arrived at its highest degrees, for that is reserved for their final state. The reward which the saints receive after the resurrection, is often spoken of as their chief reward. This is the reward that Christ has promised. John vi. 40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." This is the chief reward that the saints seek and wait for. Rom. viii. 23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan earnestly within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Philip. iii. 11. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." So the happiness, that shall be given at Christ's second coming, is spoken of as the principal happiness. Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

This the saints will be in joyful expectation of in heaven; they shall rest in sweet repose on God's promise that it shall be so, their desires of it bringing no uneasiness; they rejoicing in it most in the consideration that it will be in God's time, in the fittest and best time.

Fourthly. I shall consider the glory, honour, and peace, which the godly shall receive at the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment.

1. When the time appointed comes, notice shall be given of it in heaven, which will be to their exceeding joy. God has in his own eternal counsels fixed the time, but now it is kept secret; it is not only not known by any on the earth, but neither is it known in heaven by either saints or angels there, and the man Christ Jesus himself, in his state of humiliation, did not himself know it: Matt. xxiv. 36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The saints and angels in heaven have a joyful expectation of it, but they know not when it is; but when the time comes, God's eternal counsels concerning it shall be made known; the joyful tidings shall be proclaimed through all heaven, that all may prepare to attend the Lord Jesus Christ in his descent to the earth.

2. They shall descend with Christ from the highest heaven towards the earth. When notice is given to the heavenly host, they shall all gather themselves together to attend on this most joyful and glorious occasion; and then the glorious Son of God shall descend, and the holy angels with him, and not only the angels, but the souls of the saints shall come with Christ. 1 Thess. iv. 14. "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Christ shall descend with the glory of his Father; he shall appear in a glory becoming the Supreme Lord and Judge of heaven and earth. Now heaven will for a time be left empty of its inhabitants; those glorious and blessed abodes will be deserted by those that dwelt there, to attend the Judge of the world.

3. The saints on earth shall behold this glorious sight of their Saviour coming in the clouds of heaven, with all his holy angels with him. The first notice that shall be given of this descent shall be in heaven, but soon after there shall be notice of it on earth. Christ shall be seen coming while he is yet at a great distance; every eye shall see him, of both good and bad. And it will be the most joyful sight to the saints that ever they saw. The first notice of it will cause their hearts to overflow with joy and gladness, it will fill the hearts of the godly as full of joy as it will the wicked with terror and amazement. If the saints are then waked out of their sleep at midnight with this sound, that Christ appears in the clouds of heaven coming to judgment, it will be

joyful news to them. It is probable many of the saints at that time will be found suffering persecution, for there are several things in scripture which seem to declare, that the time when Christ is coming shall be a time when wickedness shall exceedingly abound, and the saints shall be greatly persecuted. But this shall set them at liberty, then they may lift up their heads out of prisons and dungeons, and many out of galleys, and mines, and shall see their Redeemer drawing nigh. This sight will drive away their persecutors, it will put an end to all their cruelties, and set God's people at liberty. And then when all the kindreds of the earth shall wail at the sight of Christ in the clouds of heaven, and wicked men every where shall be shrieking and crying with terrible amazement, the saints shall be filled with praise and transport. We read that, when Christ ascended into heaven, the disciples stood steadfastly looking on as he went up. But the saints then on earth shall view Christ with more steadfastness as he descends in his heavenly and exceeding glory; they shall feed and feast their eyes with this majestic sight, beholding in what solemn and glorious pomp their own blessed Redeemer descends. This sight shall put a final end to all sorrow, and their everlasting joy and glory will commence from it. The hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, is said to be a blessed hope. Titus ii. 13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." But when it comes it will be a more blessed sight.

4. The dead in Christ shall arise at the sound of the last trumpet with glorified bodies, and the living saints shall see them. The holy and blessed souls of saints that descended from heaven with Christ, shall then be re-united to those bodies that shall be prepared by infinite wisdom and skill to be fit organs for a holy and happy soul. The body shall not rise as it was before; there shall be a vast difference in it. 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The glory of that body that the saints shall rise with is what we now cannot conceive of. It shall not be such a dull and heavy moulded thing as it is now: it shall be active and vigorous as a flame of fire fit for the use of a glorified soul. It will be no clog or hinderance to the soul as it is now, but an organ every way fit for the use of a glorious spirit. It shall not be weak, infirm, and frail as it is now; for, though it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. Now the body is in need of food and sleep continually, to recreate it, but it shall not be so then; now the body is subject to weariness, and to diseases, but it shall not be so then; now if God lets in any great

matter of divine light into the soul, the body is ready to sink under it, but it shall not be so then. The glorified body of the saints shall not then fail or flag at all by the most powerful exercises of mind. Now no man can see God and live, but the body would immediately sink and be dissolved, but then the body shall not fail at all by the immediate beholding of God. Now the saints can see but little. When God a little reveals himself, as he doth at times, the saints are forced to beseech God either to strengthen them to see it, or to stay his hand; but then the body shall be so vigorous and spiritual that the constant and everlasting view of the glory of God shall not in any wise overcome it, or cause it in the least to fail.

The body shall not only be raised in an exceeding strength, but in wonderful beauty, for we are told that their bodies shall be like to Christ's glorious body. The greatest beauty that ever any human body appeared in in this world, is vile and base in comparison. The beauty of the bodies of the saints, shall not only consist in the most lovely proportion of the features of their countenance and parts of their bodies, but in a semblance of the excellencies of their minds, which will appear exceedingly in their countenance; their air and mien will be such as will naturally result from the wisdom, purity, and love of the soul, and shall denote and hold forth an inexpressible sweetness, benevolence, and complacence; and if I may speak what appears to me probable, and what seems to be authorized by the scriptures, their bodies shall be as it were clothed with garments of light. The prophet Daniel, speaking of the resurrection, says, Dan. xii. 2, 3, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And Christ, speaking of the end of the world, says, Matth. xiii. 43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." And there is nothing to hinder our understanding this literally of their bodies, and especially when this shining of the saints is spoken of from time to time as what shall be at the resurrection, and not of their souls in a separate state. Moses's face shone when he had been conversing with God in the Mount; much more may it be expected that the bodies of the saints shall shine, when they shall converse a thousand times more intimately with God, not in Mount Sinai, but in heaven. We read of Christ, that when his body was transfigured, to teach us what the body of Christ should be in its glorified state, we are told that, when his body was transfigured, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. Matth. xvii. 2. But we are told that the bodies of the saints shall

be made like unto Christ's glorious body; there therefore seems to be much ground to think, that at the resurrection the bodies of the saints shall shine with a glorious light, and that they shall be as it were clothed with light. Thus the departed saints shall arise with glorious bodies, they shall lift up their heads out of their graves with joyful and glorious countenances: and at the same time the bodies of the living shall in a moment be changed into the same strength, and activity, and incorruptibility, and beauty, and glory, with which those that were dead shall arise. 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52, 53. "Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; (for the trumpet shall sound;) and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

5. Then all the saints shall mount up, as with wings, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be for ever with him. After the dead in Christ are risen, and the living saints changed, then they will be prepared to go to Christ, and to meet the bridegroom. The world will be about to be destroyed, and the wicked shall be in dreadful amazement, but the saints shall be delivered. Dan. xii. 1. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." They shall take an everlasting farewell of this evil world where there is so much sin, and where they have met with so much trouble, and they shall be caught up in the clouds, and there they shall meet their glorious Redeemer; and a joyful meeting it will be. They shall go to Christ, never any more to be separated from him. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

6. Then shall the good works, which the saints have done, be declared to their peace and glory. We are often told that every man shall be judged according to his works, and Christ keeps a book of remembrance of the good works of the saints as well as of the sins of the ungodly. And however mean and polluted that which the saints do, is in itself, yet all the pollution that attends it is hid, and every thing they do for God that has the least sincerity in it is precious in God's eyes. Through

his infinite grace it shall in no case lose its reward, neither shall it in any wise lose its honour. At the day of judgment they shall receive praise and glory in reward for it. Christ will declare all the good they have done to their honour; what they did secretly and the world knew it not, and when they did not let their left hand know what their right hand did. Then shall they receive praise and honour for all their labour, for all their self-denial, and all their suffering in the cause of Christ; and those good works of theirs that were despised, and for which they were condemned, and suffered reproach, shall now be set in a true light; and however they were reproached and slandered by men, they shall receive praise of God in the sight of angels and men. 1 Cor. iv. 5. "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." Those righteous men that have been condemned here before unjust judges, shall be acquitted and honoured then before the righteous judge of heaven and earth. Heb. vi. 10. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Then will be the time when their Lord and master will say unto them, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Thus, in the description of the day of judgment in the 25th chapter of Matthew, Christ rehearses the good works of the saints. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And though the saints there reply, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Though they thought that nothing that they had done was worthy to be so accounted of as it was by Christ, yet Christ of his grace esteemed it highly, and highly honoured them for it, as it there follows, 40th v. "And the king shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And if the sins of the saints shall be rehearsed, it shall not be for their shame, but for the glory of divine grace, to give opportunity to them to plead the atonement of that Saviour who will be the Judge, to give occasion to them to produce Christ's righteousness, which will surely be accepted by himself.

7. The saints shall sit on thrones with Christ, to judge wicked men and devils. Christ will put that honour upon them on that day, he will cause them to sit on his right hand as judges with him, and so the saints shall judge the world. Matth. xix. 28. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" They shall judge kings and princes who were their persecutors, and the devils, who were their tempters.

8. At the finishing of the judgment Christ shall pronounce the blessed sentence upon them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

This blessed sentence Christ shall pronounce on them with inexpressible manifestations of grace and love. Every word of it will be ravishing to them, and will cause raptures of joy in ther hearts; that this glorious person, though he orders with such indignation the wicked to depart from him, yet will so sweetly invite them to come with him, and that he should accost them after such a manner, saying, "ye blessed of my Father." Christ will pronounce them blessed in the sight of men and angels; and blessed indeed, because blessed by his Father. There will not only be a manifestation of Christ's love to them in this sentence, but a declaration of the Father's love, for they are declared to be blessed of him. Christ shall invite them to come with him, and for no less a purpose than to inherit a kingdom. Christ gives them a glorious kingdom; the wealth to which he invites them is the wealth of a kingdom; and the honour he gives them is the honour of kings; and what yet adds to the blessedness is this, that it is a kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. God loved them from all eternity, and therefore he has prepared a kingdom for them. God had respect to them in the creation of the world, and then prepared this glorious kingdom for them, and out of love to them. They have therefore a right to it, and now therefore they are invited to come to possess it; and not only to possess it, but to *inherit* it, that is, to possess it as *heirs*, as those that have a right to the kingdom by virtue of their being his children.

Thus having considered what glory, honour, and peace the saints have in this life, at death, in a separate state, and at the day of judgment, I now proceed,

Fifthly, To consider their consummate state of happiness after the day of judgment. And here I would consider, 1. Their entrance into this happiness; and 2. Its nature, its degree, and some of the circumstances which attend it.

1st. Their entrance into this state of consummate happiness.

1. When the judgment is ended they shall ascend with Christ in a triumphant and glorious manner into heaven. Christ, when he has passed sentence, shall then return again; he shall pass beyond these aerial heavens, and shall ascend towards the highest heaven, together with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of glorious spirits, and of the saints with their glorified bodies. They shall leave this lower world, and all the wicked to be burnt in everlasting fire, and as they are ascending shall look back and see it all in one vast conflagration. Then shall be fulfilled, in the most remarkable manner, the prophecy in Ps. xlvii. 4, 5. "He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob, whom he loved. God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet." And that will be the most joyful procession that ever will be seen. And when they are come to heaven they shall enter in with joy into that new Jerusalem where they are to dwell for ever; and this will be the most joyful day that ever was in heaven. It is probable, that when Christ ascended into heaven after his death and resurrection, it was the most joyful day in heaven that ever had been seen till then; but this second ascension will be a more glorious and joyful day than that.

2. When they have come to heaven, they shall be there actually instated by God and Christ in their ultimate and consummate happiness; and now they shall have complete redemption. To illustrate this, it may be observed,

1. They shall be perfectly happy in the whole man; both body and soul. Before their souls only were happy, while the body lay in a state of putrefaction in the grave. Now they shall be in that state which is natural to the human soul, which is a state of union with the body. It is natural for the soul to act by a body, and to make use of such an organ, and the soul is not complete without the body; and then both body and soul shall be glorified together.

2. Then will the body of Christ be perfect and complete. Then it shall have all its members, no one wanting. Now the body of Christ is incomplete, there are many members wanting; but then it will be perfected, having every member. Now the body of Christ is in a growing state, but then it shall have come to its perfect state, to receive no more addition. Then the body of Christ shall be perfect, not only as it shall have every

member, but every member shall be in its perfect state. Now as there are many of the members of Christ's body wanting, so there are many that are imperfect; many that are ingrafted into Christ have great infirmity, and great remains of corruption, and many of his members are now under affliction. But then every member shall be perfectly freed from all sin and sorrow, and there never will be any more either sin or sorrow, in any member of the body of Christ. Then also the body of Christ will be complete, because those that are brought to a perfect state are wholly brought home; before only the soul was brought home to glory, while the body that was also to be united to Christ, lay in the grave. The body of Christ will then also be in its complete state, because then all the parts will be together; and this is one end of Christ's coming into the world, viz. that he might gather together all in one. Eph. i. 16. Before they were scattered, some in heaven and some on earth, some mixed with wicked men, as wheat with tares, and as lilies among thorns. The church, therefore, now being made complete, will exceedingly rejoice; and Christ, having his mystical body complete, will rejoice; and all his saints will rejoice with him. Christ will rejoice in the completeness of his church, and the church will rejoice in its own completeness.

3. Then will the Mediator have fully accomplished the work for which he came into the world. Then will he have perfected the work of Redemption, not only in the impetration, but also in the application of it. Then all that God has given him will be actually and fully redeemed, their bodies as well as souls; then will he have conquered all his enemies, and will triumph over them all; then he will have put down all authority and power. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's, at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet." Then Christ will surely have obtained that joy that was set before him; then he shall have perfected the full design that was upon his heart from all eternity; and then Christ will rejoice, and all his members must rejoice with him. Christ shall triumph over his enemies, and the saints shall then triumph over all their enemies, and the joys of the triumph shall last for ever.

4. Then God will have obtained the end of all his great works which he has been doing from the beginning of the world. Then will be the consummation of all things: the deep designs of God will be unfolded, his marvellous contrivances, and his hidden, intricate, and inexplicable works will appear. The end being ob-

tained, as all things are from God, so will they then all be to him, and will issue in his glory. His power appeared in the beginning of them, and his glory will be manifested in the end and consummation of them. Then will it be seen that all the revolutions and changes which have existed from the beginning of the world are for God's glory; then it will appear how all the wheels of his providence have conspired together to bring about the glory of God and Christ, and the happiness of his people, and this will cause an exceeding accession of happiness to the saints who behold it. Then will God have fully glorified himself, and glorified his Son, and glorified his elect; then he will see that all is very good, and will rejoice in his own works which will be the joy of all heaven. Then will God rest and be refreshed, and thenceforward will all the inhabitants of heaven keep an eternal sabbath of rest and praise, such as never was kept before.

5. Then will be the marriage of the Lamb. When the church is completely purified and beautified, and nothing wanting, and all the parts of the body in their due proportion and joyful state; then may the Lamb's wife be said to have made herself ready; then will she be as a bride prepared for her husband. And when the church is thus prepared by Christ at such great cost, at the shedding of his own blood; it will be brought to a more glorious union to Christ than ever before, and to a more intimate communion with him, and to a more high enjoyment of his excellency and love. Then will be the highest accomplishment of the joy spoken of in Rev. xix. 7, 8, 9. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come; and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints. And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." It will be the day of the gladness of Christ's heart; the feast, and pomp, and holy mirth, and joy of this marriage day will be continued to all eternity.

6. Then will Christ present his church to his Father. The Father sent forth Christ into the world on that errand, to redeem a vast number of the children of men, and to bring them home to God, from whom they had apostatized, to bring them back to him, the great Creator and Father of all things, and the fountain of all good. Christ, having accomplished this, will bring them to God, and present them to him; and then may Christ say, as in Heb. ii. 13, "Here am I, and the children which thou hast given me;" none of them is missing; "of those that thou hast given me, I have lost nothing." We read that Christ, when he shall have accomplished the work which the Father sent him to do, shall deliver

up the kingdom to the Father. i. Cor. xv. 24. "Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power." And as he shall deliver up the kingdom, he shall present the subjects of the kingdom; and what he has obtained by ruling, he shall present as the fruits of his reign.

7. Then will God make a still more abundant manifestation and communication of himself. God shall be all in all; and the glory of God and the glory of his Son shall be displayed in heaven, in a more abundant manner than ever before; and he will pour forth more plentifully of his spirit, and will make answerable additions to the glory of the saints, such as will be becoming the commencement of the ultimate and most perfect state of things, and such as will become the joyful occasion of the marriage of the Lamb.

2d. I shall now describe the Nature and Degree of the consummate and eternal glory and blessedness of the saints.

1. The Nature of this glory and blessedness.

1. I would begin with the lowest part of it, viz. the glory of the place. We have already observed that heaven is a place. They shall dwell in the most glorious part of whole creation of God. It is called Paradise. Luke xxiii. 43. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." 2 Cor. xii. 4. "How that he was caught up into Paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter." Rev. ii. 7. "He that hath ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." The word *Paradise* signifies a most pleasant and delightful garden, of which the garden of Eden was a type. The garden of Eden was without doubt a place that was delightful beyond what we can easily conceive; but if this earthly paradise was so delightful, how pleasant and glorious may we conclude the heavenly paradise to be; that was not made merely to be the residence of some of the innocent creatures of God during their time of probation, as Eden was, but was prepared by infinite wisdom and skill for the everlasting dwelling place of the great King of heaven and earth, and of his Son Jesus Christ; the place where they might show their glory, and wisdom, and love for ever, and which is to be the habitation of confirmed saints and angels! When God made the universe, he made many parts of it for inferior uses, in which he displayed marvellous skill; then he made the earth, and the sun, and moon, and stars, and the visible heavens, which appear truly glorious; but there was one part of the creation that God made more especially for himself, to be his own dwelling place, the place of his glorious rest, and we may conclude that this is beyond all comparison more glorious than the other parts

of it. If some parts of the visible world are so glorious, as the sun, moon, and stars, how glorious may we conclude the highest heavens to be! This is the heavenly mount Zion, the royal city of the great God. It has been the ambition of earthly monarchs to make the cities where they dwell exceedingly magnificent. Thus the king of Babylon boasted, "Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?" Dan. iv. 30. Especially will kings have their own palaces most magnificent. But if those earthly cities and palaces are some of them so glorious, which are for the habitation of worms, how glorious may we think that to be which is for the glorious habitation of God Almighty! As the third heavens are higher than the earth, so we may expect that it is proportionally more glorious than any earthly garden, city, or palace. Heaven is not only the city of God, but his palace; not only his palace, but his throne: Isai. lxvi. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me; and where is the place of my rest?" We read how magnificent was Solomon's throne. 1 Kings x. 18, 19, 20. "Moreover, the king made a great throne of ivory, and overlaid it with the best of gold. The throne had six steps, and the top of the throne was round behind: and there were stays on either side of the place of the seat, and two lions stood beside the stays. And twelve lions stood there on the one side and on the other upon the six steps: there was not the like made in any kingdom." But what is the throne of a glow-worm? God does not want skill to make his palace and throne glorious enough to become the majesty and glory of him whose house and seat it is. The builder is God, and there is no want of skill in the architect. How glorious and magnificent was the temple of Solomon, that was built only to be the place of the special symbols of God's presence on earth among his people Israel! How much more glorious is that heavenly temple which God himself has built, to be the place of his glorious presence among glorified saints and angels throughout all eternity! This is a place contrived on purpose to show the boundless riches of God's grace and love; and therefore, God has not spared as to the delights and glories with which he has adorned the place. God is rich enough to make the place transcend all created glory. Earthly kings build their houses and palaces, and make them magnificent according to their wealth and ability; but God is infinitely rich, he does not spare for the cost of the treasures to be laid out in adorning heaven, through fear of impoverishing himself. The glory of his residence is what we cannot conceive of; and this is one of those things spoken of in 1 Cor. ii.

9. " Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Therefore in the descriptions that are given of it in the scriptures, the images made use of to shadow it forth to us, are the most glorious with which we are conversant in the world. Such is the glorious description of it by John, as represented to him in the apocalyptic vision. Rev. xxi. 10, 11—18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23. " And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal. And the building of the wall of it was of jasper: and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. And the foundations of the wall of the city were garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth an emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city was pure gold, as it were, transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Heaven is here represented by a city whose very walls were made of precious stones. And the foundations were also all precious stones, and the gates were each a single pearl, and the very streets of the city were of pure gold; and yet it was something so excellent, as it appeared to John, that his comparing it to pure gold did not represent the excellency of it: it had also the beautiful transparency of clear glass. The apostle could find nothing on earth excellent enough adequately to represent its surpassing beauty " The streets of the city were pure gold, like unto clear glass." He goes on with the description in the beginning of the next chapter. Rev. xxii. 1, 2—5. " And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations—And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." This glorious place shall be the residence of the

saints for ever. They shall dwell in this house of God, as the king's children dwell with him in their father's house; they shall dwell in this house, for it is Christ's house. He is the heir and owner of it, because he is the only begotten Son of God; and the church shall dwell in it with Christ, because she is "the Lamb's wife." God has made heaven to be his own peculiar dwelling-place, and the dwelling-place of his children; when he made the world, he made heaven for them, and therefore Christ says to them at the close of their trial, Matth. xxv. 34, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

2. The glory of the bodies of the saints; but this need not be insisted on here; as I have considered it already, when speaking of the resurrection. I would only observe, that however great the glory of the place is, the glory of their bodies will doubtless be far greater; for the place is made to be a dwelling place for their glorious bodies, and the inhabitants will doubtless be more glorious than the habitation that is made for them; as the end is of greater value than the means. However bright heaven itself shall shine, the bodies of the saints themselves will shine far brighter, and appear far more beautiful.

3. The glory and beauty which God will put upon their souls, will as far exceed the beauty of their bodies, as the beauty of their bodies will far exceed the beauty of the place. Here will be their principal ornament, and if their bodies shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, how bright will their souls shine in the glorious image of God, made perfect in them! When they shall be presented to Christ, perfectly free from sin, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; when they shall appear holy and without blemish; their bodies shall not only be made like to Christ's glorious body, but their souls like to his holy and glorified soul. They shall then shine with the glory of Christ reflected from them, without any thing to obscure the bright image. Their souls shall be made glorious in wisdom and knowledge; their faculties shall be exceedingly strengthened and enlarged, their eyes made perfectly clear, and divine light shall fill the soul, so that there shall be no darkness within, and perfect love shall reign in the heart. Divine love shall be strong; all the soul shall be as it were love. This love shall be exceedingly great in the principle of it, and shall always be in its highest exercise. Then shall humility also be brought to perfection. None can now express or conceive how pure and holy will be the disposition of the soul of a glorified saint, which shall be, as it were, all love, all sweetness, all humility. The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is said to be

in the sight of God of great price, in this world; but how precious will such spiritual ornaments be in heaven, when they shall be thus perfected! The souls of the saints are God's jewels; and how bright will God make those his jewels shine in heaven, when he has polished them and fitted them to be gems in his own crown of glory! The soul of man, being spiritual and rational, is susceptible of incomparably greater beauty than the body, because the soul is capable of receiving the image of God, of which the body is not; and the souls of the saints, when God has perfected them, shall appear as the very image of God himself; and in the graces in which they shall shine shall be seen the glory of the divine workmanship in its perfection. And so lovely will they be that there will be more loveliness and beauty in the soul of one saint than in all the glory and beauty of the place put together.

4. They shall have great delight in the society and enjoyment of one another. We now do not know what enjoyment they will have in conversing together, and in communicating with each other; but doubtless it will be far more perfect than any we have now. The saints in heaven shall all be one society, they shall be united together without any schism, there shall be a sweet harmony, and a perfect union. There the saints shall see and converse with Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and David, and Isaiah, and Paul, and all the holy martyrs; and *they* shall freely converse with them. It will be a most blessed society; there shall be no jars or contentions, nor breaking out among them; no manner of strife, nor envy, nor jealousy; no ill will, but perfect peace, and perfect love through the whole society. Each one shall love every other with a most endeared and strong affection. Each one will be perfectly excellent and lovely, and will appear so in every other's eyes: they will be delighted exceedingly in that lovely and perfect image of God, which each one shall see in every other; they shall manifest their love to each other in the most becoming and amiable manner, without any thing ever to disturb or interrupt the peace of that blessed society. There shall be no mixture of wicked men among them as it is here in this world, to defile or dishonour their company. Here the visible churches of Christ are often defiled and dishonoured by one wicked man or other, but that church above shall always be perfectly pure. Rev. xxi. 27. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." This blessed family being all united in one body, as having many members, shall all subserve and contribute to each other's happiness as the members of a body that is in perfect health.

They shall delight to assist each other in their contemplations, communicating their glorious contemplations one to another. How sweetly will they converse together of the glories of God and Christ, and of God's glorious works of power, and wisdom, and mercy! and how will they convey the bright conceptions and the raptures of joy from one soul to another, imparting to each other the sweet communications which they themselves receive from the glorious king of heaven! and how will they help one another in their praises to God and Christ, each one bearing his part in the heavenly melody, extolling the most High! And what a glorious harmony of celestial voices without number will that be, when the whole assembly of the upper world shall together lift up the praises of God on high! John had this represented to him at a great distance, and tells us, Rev. xiv. 2, "I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; and I heard the voice of harpers, harping with their harps:" so ardent were they, and so great a multitude. And how will they rejoice in their numbers, to see so great a multitude all united, all perfectly holy, all full of mutual love, all fellow-citizens, all brethren!

Here a question may arise, Whether the saints, when they go to heaven, have any peculiar comfort in meeting with those who have been their pious friends on earth? I answer in the affirmative, and I think it is evident from 1 Thess. iv. 13—18. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." Here it is evident,

1. That what the apostle mentions, as a matter of comfort to Christians respecting their departed Christian friends, is that they shall meet them, and see them again. It is not only that their departed friends, though dead are happy, but they shall see them, and be with them again. This is here plainly asserted. Mourn not for them, says the apostle, as those that have no hope; for when Christ comes, God shall bring them

again, and we which are alive shall be caught up with them, and so shall we be ever with the Lord together. Wherefore comfort one another with these words. The apostle therefore must be understood to mean, that they should comfort one another when mourners, with the consideration that they should hereafter be with their departed friends again in a glorious and happy state, and never part more.

2. That there will be something else that will give comfort in meeting them in a future state, than in seeing other saints; otherwise why did the apostle mention it for their comfort, that they should see them again rather than other saints whom they had not seen or heard of? The apostle's speaking thus to the Thessalonians might give them just ground to expect, that the peculiar by strong affection which they had cherished for their departed friends, which was crossed by their departure, would be again gratified by meeting them again; for this crossing of that affection was the ground of their mourning. If the Thessalonians knew, that to see their friends again in another world would be no gratification to the affection which they had for them as their friends, and did no way think or conceive of it as such; then to think of seeing them would be no more comfort to them or remedy to their sorrow, than to think that they should see any other saint that lived or died in another country, or in a past age; and that, because it would be no remedy to the ground and foundation of their mourning, viz. the crossing their affection to them as their friends; and if it would be no remedy to their mourning, to think thus respecting it, it never would have been mentioned to them by the apostle as a ground of comfort or reason why they need not mourn. That was what they mourned for, viz. that they should not have their affections towards them satisfied by seeing them, and conversing with them again. That for which the heathen here spoken of, that have no hope, mourned excessively, was that they should never more have that affection gratified again. Hence it follows that the special affection, which the saints have in this world to other saints who are their friends, will in some respects remain in another world. There is no reason why we should suppose that saints that have dwelt together in this world, and have showed kindness to each other, have been affectionate to each other's true happiness, should not love one another with a love of gratitude for it in another world. There is no reason why good ministers whom God had made the instruments of salvation to others, should not have special joy in meeting their converts in heaven. 2 Cor. i. 14. "As also ye have acknowledged us in part that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours, in the day of the Lord Jesus." 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. "For what is our hope,

or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy." I see no reason why those that love one another with a virtuous love, and from such a love have shown kindness one to another, should not love one another the better for it in another world. There is no reason to think, that the friendship contracted here on earth between saints will be rooted out in another world. All natural affections, so far as founded in animal nature or the infirmity of the present state, will cease in another world; and with respect to any affection that the godly have had to the finally reprobate, the love of God will wholly swallow it up, and cause it wholly to cease. But I see nothing that argues that one saint in glory may not have a special respect to another, because God made use of that other as an instrument to bring him into being, and thus made him the remote occasion of his happiness; or that, when pious parents lose pious children, they may not comfort themselves with the thought that they shall go to them, as probably David did when he said concerning his child, 2 Sam. xii. 23, "But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me:" or that even a former acquaintance with persons and their virtues may not occasion a particular respect in another world. They may go to heaven with a desire to see them upon that very account. The impressions which they have of their amiable qualifications in consequence of their acquaintance with them here, may yet remain in another world.

5. The saints in heaven shall see and converse with Christ. They shall see Christ in a twofold sense.

1. They shall see him, as appearing in his glorified human nature, with their bodily eyes; and this will be a most glorious sight. The loveliness of Christ as thus appearing will be a most ravishing thing to them; for though the bodies of the saints shall appear with an exceeding beauty and glory, yet the body of Christ will without doubt immensely surpass them, as much as the brightness of the sun does that of the stars. The glorified body of Christ will be the master-piece of all God's workmanship in the whole material universe. There shall be in his glorious countenance the manifestations of his glorious spiritual perfections, his majesty, his holiness, his surpassing grace and love, and meekness. The eye will never be wearied with beholding this glorious sight. When Christ was transfigured in the mount, Peter was for making three tabernacles that Christ and Moses and Elijah might remain there, and that the heavenly vision might never come to an end.

Job had respect to this sight of Christ, and comforted himself with the thoughts of it, when he said, "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." This will be the most glorious object that the saints will ever see with their bodily eyes; and there will be far more happiness redounding to the beholders from this sight than from any other; yea the eyes of the glorified body will be given chiefly that the saints may behold this sight.

2. They shall see him with the eye of the soul. It is said, "They shall see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. "And they shall know even as they are known." 1 Cor. xiii. 2. They shall have a clear understanding of Christ as Mediator, how he has undertaken from all eternity to accomplish their salvation. They shall understand the glorious covenant of redemption between the Father and the Son; shall see the eternal love Christ had to them before the foundation of the world. They shall in all probability understand the mystery of his incarnation. They shall know and understand the gloriousness of the way of salvation by Christ, "which things the angels desire to look into;" they shall have a full understanding of the infinite wisdom of God in contriving the plan of salvation; shall comprehend the height, and depth, and length, and breadth of the love of Christ to sinners, in undergoing for them the agony of the garden, and the more overwhelming agonies of the cross. Now the heart is dull in the contemplation of such things. How often are they heard of by the saints on earth with but little affection! How often, when they see them set forth in the Lord's supper, are they cold and lifeless! But then it shall not be so; then the wonderful works of God, and the love of Christ in the work of redemption, will appear as they are: then there will constantly without any interruption be a most lively and full sense of it, without any deadness or coldness; every thing in the work of redemption will appear in its true glory, the understanding shall be wonderfully opened, and it shall be perpetually like the clear hemisphere with the sun in the meridian, and there shall never come over one cloud to darken the mind. And then the saints shall see fully how the excellence and loveliness of Christ appear in all that he did and suffered: they shall see the loveliness of those excellencies that appeared in Christ's human nature when on earth; his wonderful meekness and humility, his patience under suffering, his perfect obedience to the Father. And then shall they also see the beauty that ap-

pears in Christ's human nature in its glorified state, wherein the excellencies of it shine without a vail. They shall also see the excellence of the divine nature of Christ; they shall behold clearly and immediately his divine majesty, and his divine and infinite holiness, and grace and love. They shall see Christ as the perfect image of God, an image wherein all the glory of the divine nature is fully expressed; they shall behold him as the brightness of his Father's glory; and they shall see that bright and perfect image of God which the Father beheld, and was infinitely happy in beholding from all eternity. But this sight of the glory of Christ in his divine nature belongs to that beatific vision, of which I would speak more particularly hereafter.

2. They shall not only see this glorious person, as at a distance, but they shall be admitted to be near him, and to converse with him. This sight of his glory and loveliness will fill them with the most exalted love, which love will cause them to desire conversation; and they shall be admitted to it, to the full of their desires, and that at all times. Two things may be observed concerning this converse with Christ, to which the saints shall be admitted in heaven.

1. It shall be most free and intimate. There shall be nothing to forbid them or deter them. Though Christ is so glorious a person, in so exalted a state in heaven, being Lord of heaven and earth, yet he will treat them as brethren, and they shall converse with him as friends. He will also honour them and advance them to the dignity of kings, that they may be fit to converse with so glorious a King. Rev. i. 6. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever, Amen." Christ, when on earth, treated his disciples with great familiarity and freedom, he treated them as friends. John xv. 15. "I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I call you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." So in heaven he will not keep them at a greater distance, but admit them nearer; because they shall be fitted to be nearer to him and to converse more intimately with him. O how happy will it render them to have so great and honourable a person treating them with such grace and condescension!

Though they shall see the awful majesty of Christ, that will not make them afraid, because they will see his love and grace, and condescension, equal to his majesty.

2. This converse shall be most full and satisfying. This is evident from that most emphatic expression of the church being "the bride, the Lamb's wife." He will open the infinite and eternal fountain of his love to them, and will pour forth that fountain into their hearts. This love will be as a pure river of water

of life, a river of pleasures, constantly flowing into the souls of the saints, that shall be in them as rivers of living water. And they shall also in their converse with Christ manifest their love to him: their hearts shall flow out in an unceasing stream, or ascend continually in a rapturous transport of love. Of those things we can say but little now; yet sometimes when God helps us we can conceive of them a little, but it is but a little at the most.

6. The saints in heaven shall see God. They shall not only see that glorious city, and the saints there, and the holy angels, and the glorified body of Christ; but they shall see God himself. This is promised to the saints. Matth. v. 8. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. "For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face; now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." This is that, which is called by divines "the beatific vision," because this is that in which the blessedness of the saints in glory does chiefly consist. This is the fountain, the infinite fountain of their blessedness. The sight of Christ, which has already been spoken of, is not here to be excluded, for he is a divine person; the sight of him in his divine nature therefore belongs to the beatifical vision. This vision of God is the chief bliss of heaven, and therefore I would speak of it a little more particularly. And,

1. As to the Faculty that is the subject of this vision. It is no sight of any thing with the bodily eyes; but it is an intellectual view. The beatific vision of God, is not a sight with the eyes of the body, but with the eyes of the soul. There is no such thing as seeing God properly with the bodily eyes, because he is a spirit: one of his attributes is, that he is invisible. 1. Tim. i. 17. "Now unto the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever." Colos. i. 15. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature." Heb. xi. 27. "By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible." This highest blessedness of the soul, does not enter in at the door of the bodily senses; this would be to make the blessedness of the soul dependent on the body, or the happiness of man's superior part to be dependent on the inferior. The beatific vision of God is not any sight with the bodily eyes, because the separate souls of the saints, and the angels which are mere spirits, and never were united to body, have this vision. Matth. xviii. 10. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." It is not in beholding any form or visible representation, or shape, or colour, or shining light, in which the highest happiness of the soul consists; but it is in seeing God, who is a spirit, spiritually, with the eyes of the soul.

We have no reason to think that there is any such thing as God's manifesting himself by any outward glorious appearance, that is, the symbol of his presence in heaven, any otherwise than by the glorified body of Christ. God was wont in the old testament, oftentimes to manifest himself by an outward glory, and sometimes in a outward shape, or the form of a man. But when God manifested himself thus, it was by Christ; it was the Second Person of the Trinity only that was wont thus to appear to men in an outward glory and human shape. John i. 18. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him." But since Christ has actually assumed a human body, there is no need of his assuming any aerial form or shape any more. The Deity now became visible to the bodily eyes in a more perfect manner by his having a real body. The saints that shall see Christ in heaven in his glorified body, much more properly see Christ than if they only saw an assumed shape, or some outward glorious appearance, as the symbol of his presence; for now, that which they see is not only a glorious appearance by which Christ is represented, but the real Christ; it is his own body. The seeing God in the glorified body of Christ is the most perfect way of seeing God with the bodily eyes that can be; for in seeing a real body, which one of the persons of the Trinity has assumed to be his body, and in which he dwells for ever as his own, the divine majesty and excellency appear as much as it is possible for them to appear in outward form or shape. The saints do actually see a divine person with bodily eyes, and in the same manner as we see one another. But when God showed himself under outward appearances and symbols of his presence only, that was not so proper a sight of a divine person, and it was a more imperfect way of God's manifesting himself, suitably to the more imperfect state of the church under the old testament. But now Christ really subsists in a glorified body; those outward symbols and appearances are done away, as being needless and imperfect. This more imperfect way therefore is altogether needless, seeing Christ there appears as a glorified body.

This seems to be one end of God's assuming a human body, viz. that the saints might see God with bodily eyes; that they may see him, not only in the understanding, but in every way of seeing of which the human nature is capable; that we might see God as a divine person as we see one another. And there is no need of God the Father's manifesting himself in any other glorious form; for he that sees the Son, sees the Father, John xiv. 9; and that because he is the image of the invisible God. Coloss. i. 15.—Heb. i. 3. "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on

the right hand of the Majesty on high." But if there be any outward symbol by which God the Father represents himself in heaven; seeing that is not the beatific vision, for that is a far more imperfect way of seeing God than seeing him with the eye of the soul; the soul is capable of apprehending God in a thousand times more perfect and glorious manner than the eye of the body is; the soul has in itself those powers whereby it is sufficiently capable of apprehending spiritual objects without looking through the windows of the outward senses. The soul is capable of seeing God more immediately, and more certainly, and more fully and gloriously than the eye of the body is.

2. The act of vision. And,

1. It will be an Immediate sight, it will be no apprehension of God's excellency by acquiring it from his works; neither will it be such a spiritual sight of God as the saints have in this world, seeing him in his word and making use of his ordinances, which is called seeing "through a glass darkly." Then they shall see him "face to face." 1 Cor. xiii. 12. They shall not only see the glory of God as reflected from other things, but they shall see him as we see the sun, by his own light in a clear hemisphere. It will be an intuitive view of God. What knowledge the saints have of God in this world is like the twilight before sun-rising; it is not the direct light of the sun, but the light of the sun reflected, and it is comparatively a dim light; but hereafter the saints shall enjoy the perfect day, they shall see God as we immediately behold the sun after it is risen above the horizon, and no cloud or vapour in the heavens to hinder its sight.

2. It shall be, according to men's capacity, a perfect sight. It shall not be a perfectly comprehensive sight, because it is impossible that a saint's mind should comprehend God; but yet it shall be perfect in its kind, it shall be perfectly certain, without any doubt or possibility of doubt. There shall be a view of God in his being, and in his power, and wisdom, and holiness, and goodness, and love, and all-sufficiency, that shall be attended with intuitive certainty, without any mixture of unbelief, and with much greater certainty than any sight with the bodily eye. And then it shall be perfectly clear without any view of darkness. Now, how much darkness is there mingled with that spiritual sight, which the saints have of God's glory in this world! But then, there shall be no obscurity, nothing to cloud the understanding, or to hinder the clearness of the view. God shall be hid with no vail, neither shall there be any vail in the heavens. And this sight shall be most enlarged; they shall see vastly more of the glory of God than any of the saints do in this world; the souls of the saints shall be like the angels in extensiveness of understanding.

3. The Object of this vision: concerning which I observe,

1. They shall see every thing in God that tends to excite and inflame love, i. e. every thing that is lovely, every thing that tends to exalt their esteem and admiration, to warm and endear the heart. They shall behold the infinite excellency and glory of God, shall have a blessed-making sight of his glorious Majesty and of his infinite holiness; shall see as those angels do, of whom we read in Isai. vi. 3. "That, standing before the throne, they cry "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts," and shall behold the infinite grace and goodness of God. Then shall that glorious fountain and ocean be opened fully to their view; then shall they behold all its excellency and loveliness, they shall have a clear sight of his immense glory and excellency.

2. They shall see every thing in God that gratifies love. They shall see in him all that love desires. Love desires the love of the beloved. So the saints in glory shall see God's transcendent love to them; God will make ineffable manifestations of his love to them. They shall see as much love in God towards them as they desire; they neither will nor can crave any more. This very manifestation that God will make of himself that will cause the beatific vision, will be an act of love in God: it will be from the exceeding love of God to them that he will give them this vision, which will add an immense sweetness to it. When they see God so glorious, and at the same time see how greatly this God loves them, what delight will it not cause in the soul! Love desires union. They shall therefore see this glorious God united to them, and see themselves united to him. They shall see that he is their Father, and that they are his children. They shall see God gloriously present with them; God with them; and God in them; and they in God. Love desires the possession of its object. Therefore they shall see God, even their own God; when they behold this transcendent glory of God, they shall see him as their own. When they shall see that glory, power, and wisdom of God, they shall see it as altogether engaged for them; when they shall see the beauty of God's holiness, they shall see it as their own, for them to enjoy for ever; when they see the boundless ocean of God's goodness and grace, they shall see it to be all theirs.

4. The Manner in which they shall see and enjoy God; and that is as having communion with Christ therein. The saints shall enjoy God, as partaking with Christ of his enjoyment of God; for they are united to him, and are glorified and made happy in the enjoyment of God as his members. As the members of the body partake of the life and health of the head, so the saints in glory shall be happy as partaking of the blessedness of the Son of God; they being in Christ, shall partake of the love of God the Father to Christ. And as the Son knows the Father, so they

shall partake with him in his sight of God, as being as it were parts of him. As he is in the bosom of the Father, so are they in the bosom of the Father; as he has immense joy in the love of the Father, so have they, every one of them in their measure, the same joy in the Father's love.

Herein they shall enjoy God in a more exalted and excellent manner than man would have done if he had never fallen; for doubtless that happiness, that Christ himself partakes of in his Father's bosom, is transcendently sweet and excellent; and how happy therefore are they who are admitted to partake of that portion of delight with him!

5. The Agent by whom this vision of God shall be communicated; viz. the Holy Spirit. As it is by the Holy Spirit that a spiritual sight of God is given in this world, so it is the same Holy Spirit by whom the beatific vision is given of God in heaven. The saints in heaven are as dependent on God for all their happiness, and all their holiness, and all their light, as those on earth; there all is from God by his Holy Spirit, just as it is here. They shall have the beatific vision of God because they will be full of God, filled with the Holy Spirit of God. The Holy Ghost is the pure river of water of life that proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, spoken of in Rev. xxii. 1.

6. The Effects of this vision. And these are, that the soul shall be inflamed with love, and satisfied with pleasure.

1. It shall be inflamed with love. The soul shall not be an inactive spectator, but shall be most active, and in the most ardent exercise of love towards the object seen. The soul shall be as it were all eyes to behold, and yet all act to love. The soul shall be as full of love as it shall be of light, and of both it shall be as full as it can hold. The understanding will be in its most perfect act in beholding, and the will will be in its most perfect act in loving. This love will be perfectly such as it ought to be. It shall be perfectly humble, the soul shall be in its place at all times, adoring at God's feet, and yet embraced in the arms of his love. This love shall excite them to praise. And therefore, singing praises and hallelujahs shall be that in which they shall unweariedly be employed.

2. This sight of God shall satisfy the soul with pleasure. So great will the joy be that the soul will desire no greater. It shall be as full of grace, as the large desires of the soul can receive. So sweet shall it be, that the soul will desire nothing sweeter. So pure and excellent will it be, that the soul will desire nothing better. Ps. xvii. 15. "As for me I shall behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness." When the soul beholds the glory and love of God, it shall be at the same time filled with the glory and love of God; it shall receive satis-

fying pleasure. for it shall receive God. God will communicate, and as it were pour forth himself into the soul. And with what inexpressible sweetness and complacency will the soul open itself to be thus filled, as the flowers open before the sun to be filled with his light and pleasant influences!

Having thus considered wherein the eternal happiness of the saints consists, I proceed next to consider some circumstances of it.

1. It will add sweetness to the happiness of heaven, that it is all the fruit of free grace, and the dying love of Christ. The saints in this world are of that spirit that they choose the way of salvation, by free and sovereign grace; and salvation in this way seems better and sweeter by far, than if they could have it by their own works. Much more will this exceedingly heighten the sweetness of their happiness when they are in heaven, when their love, and their humility will be perfect, when they will be abundantly more sensible than they are now, what vile creatures they were in this world; and when they consider to what exceeding glory God has advanced them, what a sweet admiration will it excite in them of the free and boundless grace of God! And what a sweetness will it add that all this glorious blessedness which they possess, is not of themselves, but is the fruit of the love of that glorious person whom they shall then see in his glory, the fruit of his dying love, that it was bought by his own precious blood! It adds greatly to the value of a gift, if we receive it from a dear friend as a token of his love; but how greatly then will heaven be the more prized by the saints, when they consider it as the fruit of his love who is so glorious and excellent, and who is so exceedingly beloved by them!

2. It will give them the greater sense of their own blessedness, when they contemplate the misery of those who are finally lost, and consider how exceedingly different is their own state. The saints will witness the misery of the wicked, they shall see their state at the day of judgment, they shall see them at the left hand with devils, shall hear the sentence pronounced, and see it executed. This shall greatly heighten the sense of their own happy state, when they consider how different their own state is, how differently God has dealt with themselves from what he has done with the wicked; when they see how dreadful the misery is from which they are delivered and which they must have unavoidably suffered, had not God graciously redeemed them; when they consider that they deserved this misery as well as those that suffer it, but that Christ has of his free grace redeemed them. This will give exalted thoughts of the free grace of God, and cause them exceedingly to admire it, and will greatly heighten their exercises of love to him who has been so gracious to them, and consequently will heighten their joy

in his love. As the damned when they contemplate the happiness of the saints in heaven will find their own misery aggravated, so the saints in heaven when they contemplate the misery of the damned in hell, will feel a greater sense of their own happiness.

3. There are different degrees of happiness and glory in heaven. As there are degrees among the angels, viz. thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; so there are degrees among the saints. In heaven are many mansions, and of different degrees of dignity. The glory of the saints above will be in some proportion to their eminency in holiness and good works here. Christ will reward all according to their works. He that gained ten pounds was made ruler over ten cities, and he that gained five pounds over five cities. Luke xix. 17. 2 Cor. ix. 6. "He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." And the apostle Paul tells us that, as one star differs from another star in glory, so also it shall be in the resurrection of the dead. 1 Cor. xv. 41. Christ tells us that he who gives a cup of cold water unto a disciple in the name of a disciple shall in no wise lose his reward. But this could not be true, if a person should have no greater reward for doing many good works than if he did but few. It will be no damp to the happiness of those who have lower degrees of happiness and glory, that there are others advanced in glory above them: for all shall be perfectly happy, every one shall be perfectly satisfied. Every vessel that is cast into this ocean of happiness is full, though there are some vessels far larger than others; and there shall be no such thing as envy in heaven, but perfect love shall reign through the whole society. Those who are not so high in glory as others, will not envy those that are higher, but they will have so great, and strong, and pure love to them, that they will rejoice in their superior happiness; their love to them will be such that they will rejoice that they are happier than themselves; so that instead of having a damp to their own happiness, it will add to it. They will see it to be fit that they that have been most eminent in works of righteousness should be most highly exalted in glory; and they will rejoice in having thatd one, that is fittest to be done. There will be a perfect harmony in that society: those that are most happy will also be most holy, and all will be both perfectly holy, and perfectly happy. But yet there will be different degrees of both holiness and happiness according to the measure of each one's capacity, and therefore those that are lowest in glory will have the greatest love to those that are highest in happiness, because they will see most of the image of God in them; and having the greatest love to them, they will rejoice to see them the most happy and the highest in glory. And so, on the other hand, those that are highest in glory, as they will be the most lovely, so they will be fullest of love: as they

will excel in happiness, they will proportionally excel in divine benevolence and love to others, and will have more love to God and to the saints than those that are lower in holiness and happiness. And besides, those that will excel in glory will also excel in humility. Here in this world, those that are above others are the objects of envy, because that others conceive of them as being lifted up with it; but in heaven it will not be so, but those saints in heaven who excel in happiness will also in holiness, and consequently in humility. The saints in heaven are more humble than the saints on earth, and still the higher we go among them the greater humility there is; the highest orders of saints, who know most of God, see most of the distinction between God and them, and consequently are comparatively least in their own eyes, and so are most humble. The exaltation of some in heaven above the rest will be so far from diminishing the perfect happiness and joy of the rest who are inferior, that they will be the happier for it; such will be the union in their society that they will be partakers of each other's happiness. Then will be fulfilled in its perfection that which is declared in 1 Cor. xii. 22, "If one of the members be honoured all the members rejoice with it."

This happiness of the saints shall never have any interruption. There will never be any alloy to it; there never will come any cloud to obscure their light: there never will be any thing to cool their love. The rivers of pleasure will not fail, the glory and love of God and of Christ will for ever be the same, and the manifestation of it will have no interruption. No sin or corruption shall ever enter there, no temptation to disturb their blessedness: the divine love in the saints shall never cool, there shall be no inconsistency in any of them, the faculties of the saints shall never flag from exercise; and they will never be cloyed, their relish for those delights will for ever be kept up to its height, that glorious society shall not grow weary of their hallelujahs. Their exercises, though they are so active and vigorous, will be performed with perfect ease; the saints shall not be weary of loving, and praising, and fearing, as the sun is never weary of shining.

5. And to sum up this whole description, there shall never be any end to their glory and blessedness. Therefore is it so often called eternal life, and everlasting life. We are told that at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous shall enter into life eternal. Matth. xxv. 46. The pleasures which there are at God's right hand, are said to be for evermore; Psalm xvi. 11: And that this is not merely a long duration, but an absolute eternity, is evident from that which Christ has said, that those who believe on him shall not die. John vi. 50. Rev. xxii. 5. In the description of the New Jerusalem it is said, "And they shall reign for ever and ever." The

eternity of this blessedness shall crown all. If the saints knew that there would be an end to their happiness, though at never so great a distance, yet it would be a great damp to their joy. The greater the happiness is, so much the more uncomfortable would the thoughts of an end be, and so much the more joyful will it be to think that there will be no end. The saints will surely know that there will be no more danger of their happiness coming to an end, than there will be that the being of God will come to an end. As God is eternal, so their happiness is eternal; as long as the fountain lasts, they need not fear but they shall be supplied.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we learn how great a mercy conversion is, because it confers upon him who is exposed to eternal misery a right to all this blessedness. Man, as he is naturally, is very far from this blessedness; we came into the world wretched, miserable, undone creatures, in cruel bondage to sin and Satan, under guilt and under wrath, and at enmity against God, the fountain of blessedness, and in a state of condemnation to everlasting destruction. But when a man is converted there is a great change made in his state; he is that day passed from death to life, he is brought out of that state of wo and misery into a sure title to glory, honour, and peace for ever. When once a man is converted all this blessedness that we have heard of is his, he has an absolute right to it, God's word is passed for it, his faithful promise is given. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but that promise of God shall not fail, but shall be fulfilled: their witness is in heaven, and their record on high. On that day in which a man is converted he enters into a blessed state, he is sure to be a blessed person as long as he lives; and he has a right to all that blessedness we have heard of, at death, and in a state of separation, and at the day of judgment, and to that glory which the saints have in their state of consummate glory and blessedness. This teaches how great and how blessed a change conversion is in its consequences, and what cause have they who have good ground to think that they have been the subjects of it to bless and praise, and extol the name of God, when they consider what a situation they were once in, and what a happy state they are now in; for the bringing them out of that miserable state into so glorious a state is owing only to free and sovereign grace. 1 Cor. iv. 7. "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?"

2. Hence we may learn the folly of those that are cold and slack in seeking salvation, seeing that the glory and happiness of those who are saved is so exceedingly great. How un-

reasonable is it to expect to obtain that which is so great without effort! Men will seek worldly riches and honours that are worth so little, and cannot make them happy, and will soon vanish away, with great and indefatigable labour and diligence; and shall men expect to obtain such eternal glory and blessedness in a slack and cold way of seeking it? How unlike the nature and importance of this blessedness do men treat it that seek it in a cold and careless manner! and can it be expected that God will also treat it so unlike its value, as to bestow it upon such seekers?

3. Hence we may solve the difficulty of some Christians meeting with so much affliction and darkness in the world. Some godly persons are the subjects of very great outward afflictions, and some are the subjects of great spiritual darkness; some truly godly persons spend great part of their lives in the dark, in exercising doubts, and anxious thoughts, and distressing fears. And oftentimes God's people make this an argument against themselves. They argue that if God loved them, and had made them his children, he would never leave them in such darkness and distress, he would give them more of the light of his countenance. They are ready to say with themselves, if God loves me, why does he not give me more comfort, why does he see me in such darkness, and does not comfort me? But what we have heard may solve all the difficulty. If their happiness throughout all eternity be so great, of how little consequence is it what may be their condition for that short moment they continue in this world! What if they are in the dark, what if they walk in darkness and are exercised with great trouble! how little difference will it make, though it be cast into the scales, when weighed against that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory! It will prove lighter than vanity. If God gives eternal happiness to them, that is evident proof of his love, and all the darkness and sorrow they can meet with in this world are not worthy to be mentioned. All this darkness, how long soever continued, if we compare it with future glory, vanishes into nothing.

4. This subject furnishes solid ground of consolation to the righteous. What can be matter of greater joy and comfort to any person than to consider that he is entitled to such eternal blessedness? Here is sufficient consolation under all adversity; whatever changes we meet with in the world, this may be matter of abundant comfort under the greatest and heaviest trials. In these things a Christian may well rejoice, though the fig-tree should not blossom, and there should be no fruit in the vine. Having this firm support and consolation, a Christian will not

fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.

Let these things, therefore, comfort thee, who fearest and lovest God and trustest in Christ. What a glorious hope, and incorruptible and undefiled, and never-fading inheritance, are reserved in heaven for thee! Hence I would answer an objection or two, that unbelief in the saint may be ready to make against what has been said.

1. Some may be ready to say, this glory and blessedness are so great and wonderful that it seems too great to be given to such creatures as men are; it seems almost incredible that God should so exalt and advance worms of the dust.

Answer. The death and sufferings of Christ make every thing credible that belongs to this blessedness. If God has not thought his own Son too much for us, what will he think too much for us? If God did not spare him, but gave him even to be made a reproach, and a curse, and a victim to death for us, no blessedness, however great, can be incredible which is the fruit of this. Rom. viii. 32. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If God would so contrive to show his love in the manner and means of procuring our happiness, nothing can be incredible in the degree of the happiness itself: if nothing be too much to be given to man, and to be done for man in the manner of procuring his happiness, nothing will be too much to be given to him as the happiness procured, and no degree of happiness too great for him to enjoy. If all that God does about it be consistent, his infinite wisdom will also work to make their happiness and glory great in the degree of it.

2. Some Christians may still be ready to object. It is not too great to be bestowed on others, yet it seems to me too great to be bestowed on such an unworthy creature as I; it seems incredible that God should ever give such glory to such an one as I am, that am so mean, and so worthless, and vile. I not only was once unworthy, but I am so unworthy still, I am so blind, I have so much sin, and so little goodness, I commit so much sin, and do so little good, that it appears incredible that I should have a title to such blessedness. I can far more easily think that others will possess it than myself.

Answer. It is no way incredible that infinite grace should bestow it on the meanest and unworthiest. God's design is to glorify his free grace, and this is one way by which free grace is glorified, viz. by bestowing such great blessedness on the most unworthy. This is of a piece with the rest. Every thing

in the work of redemption is wonderful, and therefore one of the names by which Christ is called, is Wonderful. As grace is wonderful in the means of procurement, viz. giving Christ to die, and wonderful in the degree of happiness procured; so it is wonderful with respect to the subjects of it, that they are in themselves so mean and unworthy.

5. This subject furnishes ground of solemn exhortation to natural men, earnestly to seek this blessedness. And here you may well consider,

1. How poor you are who have no heaven but this world! In this exceeding and eternal glory of which you have heard, you have no lot or portion; you have nothing but a little part of this clod of earth; and what is all that you have worth? If you have a little more land than some of your neighbours, or if you are in a way to make more money than others, if your accommodations are better than others', and you have more worldly conveniences and pleasures than others, or if you are promoted a little higher among men than some others are, what a poor portion is this; and how miserable are you who have no better happiness that you can call your own! How happy do these things make you, what great satisfaction do they yield to you! Are such things as these the rivers of pleasure that you choose for your portion? O, how miserable are you that have your portion in this life! When a few days are passed you must go to the grave and into eternity, and then your glory shall not descend after you; and how wretched are they of whom it may be said, when they have done with worldly enjoyments, that they have received their consolation! Luke vi. 24.

2. To what misery are you exposed! You not only have no lot in this happiness and glory, but you are hanging over endless misery, and are in danger every day of being irrecoverably lost.

3. You have now an opportunity to obtain this blessedness. It is true that now you are exposed to this misery, but yet this glory is offered to you; the time is not past wherein the offer is made; you have yet an opportunity to be made happy for ever. The opportunity you now have to obtain the happiness of another world is worth ten thousands of this world.

But here I would say something by way of direction in answer to this.

Inquiry. What must I be brought to, in order to get to heaven?

Answer. 1. You must be brought entirely to renounce all hope of obtaining heaven by any thing that you can do by your own strength,—that you cannot do it either directly or indirectly. Many are sensible that they cannot get to heaven by

their own strength directly, but yet they hope to do it indirectly; they hope by their own strength to bring themselves to a disposition to close with Christ, and accept of him for a Saviour; they are hoping to bring themselves to a compliance with the terms of salvation. You must be brought off from all confiding in your own strength; and you must also be brought to renounce your own righteousness as the price of heaven. The consideration of what has been said of the glory and happiness of the saints, may show us the exceeding folly of those that think to purchase so great happiness by their own righteousness. What a vain thought have men of their performances to think them a sufficient price to offer to God to purchase such glory of him! How would God dishonour himself, and dishonour such riches of his own goodness, if he should bestow them on men for their righteousness, and should accept their miserable performances as the price of them!

2. Your heart must be brought to close with him who has purchased heaven. Renouncing all other ways, your heart must entirely close with him, and adhere to him, as the way, the truth, and the life. Your heart must be drawn to him, and it must be pleasing and sweet to you to have heaven as a free gift, as the fruit of mercy and saving grace, and you must assuredly believe that Christ is a sufficient Saviour, and your soul must acquiesce in the way of salvation by him, by his blood and his righteousness, as a wise, holy, sufficient, and excellent way. Your heart must incline to Jesus Christ as a Saviour above your own righteousness and all other ways. Your delight must be in this holy way of salvation.

3. You must choose the God of heaven for your Portion. You must be of the same temper and disposition with the psalmist, who says, Ps. lxxiii. 25, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none on the earth whom I desire beside thee." You must esteem and relish the enjoyment of him far above all other things. You must be brought to see that there is that in the enjoyment of God and communion with him that is far better than all the profits or pleasures of the world. It must be so with you, that if you could have your choice of all kinds of happiness you could devise, and have which you would, and in what degree you would, to all eternity, this would be what you would far prefer.

4. Your heart must be brought sincerely to close with the employments of heaven. In heaven they are not idle, but they are continually employed, and their employments are holy employments; they spend their time wholly in holy exercises: in contemplating on God, in praising and serving him. Rev. xxii. 3. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God

and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." If ever you go to heaven, your heart must be brought beforehand to such a temper as freely to choose such employments, you must have a relish of them, and must account them excellent and delightful employments.

5. You must be pure in heart, and clean in hands. The pure in heart alone shall see God. Matt. v. 8. They that shall ascend into God's holy hill, are those that are of pure hearts and clean hands. Ps. xxiv. 4. You must hate and abhor all sin, and allow none in your life. Sin must become to you a great burden. You must loathe yourself for it, and fight and strive against it, to purge yourself more and more from it; striving more and more to mortify sin, earnestly desiring and seeking to be more holy, more conformed to the will of God, and to walk more becoming a Christian.

6. You must be brought to sell all for heaven. Matth. xiii. 44, 45, 46. Heaven must be to you like the treasure hid in a field; or like the pearl of great price. If you would have heaven, you must take it as your whole portion; you must in your heart part with all other things for it, and it must be your manner actually to part with them whenever they stand in the way of your getting forward towards heaven. If you would have heaven, you must sell your worldly profit and your credit, and the good will of your neighbours, and your worldly pleasures and conveniences, and whatever stands in your way. Many flatter themselves that they shall obtain heaven without this, and think they have a right to heaven, though they were never brought to this, but they are sure to find themselves disappointed.

7. You must never expect to go to heaven in any other than a strait and narrow way. Some expect to get heaven who are not walking in a narrow way. The way they are walking in is a way of indulging their ease and of shifting off the hard and difficult parts of religion. It is not the way of self-denial, and toil, and labouriousness, but they walk in a broad way, a way wherein they are not pinched, but can go on without labour, or watchfulness, or bearing the cross. But such as these, let their hopes be what they may, and their profession what it may, and their pretences to experiences what they may, are not like to get to heaven. To some, the way that the scripture has laid out is too narrow and strait; therefore they are endeavouring to get to heaven, in a broad way, but it is in vain for you to contrive this. If you can find out any way of getting to heaven that is not a strait and narrow way, it will be a way that you are the first inventor of. If you go thither, you must go in the way of the footsteps of the flock. If you would go to heaven, you must be content to go there in the way of self-denial and sufferings,

you must be willing to take up the cross daily and follow Christ, and through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

6. This subject furnishes ground of solemn exhortation to the godly, to strive earnestly after holiness of life. What manner of persons ought you to be in all holy conversation and godliness, who have received such infinite mercy of God, and entertain such glorious hopes; seeing God has admitted you to such happiness, earnestly to labour that you may walk in some measure answerably; seeing God has admitted you to the happiness of children, walk as children. Eph. v. 1. Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; imitate your heavenly Father; be ye holy, for he is holy. Seeing that you are admitted to the blessedness of disciples and friends of Jesus, and walk as the friends of Christ, imitate your glorious Lord and head. Here consider several things: particularly,

1. What great love God hath bestowed upon you in choosing you to such unspeakable blessedness before the foundation of the world. How wonderful was the love of God in giving his Son to purchase this blessedness for you, and how wonderful was the love of the Son of God in shedding his own blood to purchase such glory for you! how ought you therefore to live to God's glory! Let me therefore beseech, by those great mercies of God, that you give yourself up a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. And be not slothful in business, but fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Give the utmost diligence that you may keep all the commandments of God: study that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; study that in all things you may be found approved, seeing God hath so loved you; strive earnestly that you may bring forth the fruits of the love of God, and seeing Christ hath so loved you, see that you love one another; let love be without dissimulation; be ye kindly affectioned one with another with brotherly love; be of the same mind one towards another, in honour preferring one another; have fervent charity among yourselves. Seeing God hath mercy on you, be ye merciful as your Father which is in heaven is merciful. Look not every one on his own things; be pitiful, be courteous; be ready to distribute, willing to communicate; be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another. Christ hath thus loved you while an enemy; therefore recompense to no man evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing; do good to them that do evil to you. Such things as these become those that are the heirs of the glory that we have heard of.

2. Consider how much above the world that blessedness is which God has given; how therefore ought you to live above

the world. God has redeemed you out of the world, and therefore do not live as though you had your portion in this life. Live as pilgrims and strangers; as those that are not at home; as fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. How dishonourable will it be to you that God had so advanced and entitled you to such glory, to set your heart upon the dust of the earth; how you dishonour the grace of God in giving you such blessedness; and how will you dishonour the blessedness that God has given, no more to set your heart on it, and to set it so much on the world!

3. Consider what a vast difference has God made between you and other men, how vastly different is your relative state from theirs, how much more has God done for you than for them.. Seek therefore those things which are above, where God is. Will it not be a shame if one that is entitled to such glory conducts no better than a child of the devil? Consider it seriously; and let it not be asked with reference to you, Matth. v. 47, What do ye more than others? Other men love those that love them; other men do good to those that do good to them: walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called; and let it appear that you are of a spirit more excellent than your neighbour; manifest more love, and more meekness, and more humility, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; walk worthy of the Lord to all pleasing, strengthened with all might according to his glorious power unto all patience and long suffering. Put ye on as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, gentleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another, forgiving one another; and let your light so shine before men, that they, seeing your good works, may glorify your Father who is in heaven. Seeing God has given you so much, God and men may well expect of you, that you should be greatly distinguished in your life from other men.

SERMON IX.

MATTHEW v. 8.

Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

GOD formerly delivered his law from mount Sinai, by an audible voice, with the sound of a trumpet, with the appearance of devouring fire, with thunders, and lightnings, and earthquakes. But the principal discoveries of God's word and will to mankind were reserved to be given by Jesus Christ, his own Son, and the Redeemer of men, who is the light of the world.

In this sermon of Christ, of which the text is a part, we hear him delivering the mind of God also from a mountain. Here is God speaking, as well as from mount Sinai, and as immediately, but after a very different manner. There God spake by a preternatural formation of sounds in the air; here he becomes incarnate, takes on him our nature, and speaks, and converses with us, not in a preternatural, awful, and terrible manner, but familiarly as one of us. His face was beheld freely by all that were about him; his voice was human without those terrors which made the children of Israel desire that God might speak to them immediately no more; and the revelation which he makes of God's word is more clear and perfect, and fuller of the discoveries of spiritual duties, of the spiritual nature of the command of God, of our spiritual and true happiness, and of mercy and grace to mankind. John i. 17. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

This discourse of Christ on the mount seems principally levelled against the false notions, and carnal prejudices that were at that day embraced by the nation of the Jews; and those benedictions, which we have in the beginning of his sermon, were sayings that were mere parodoxes to them, wholly contrary to the notions which they had received. That he, who was poor in spirit, was blessed, was a doctrine contrary to the received opinion of the world, and especially of that nation, who were exceedingly ambitious of the praise of men, and highly conceited of their own righteousness. And that he was a blessed and happy man, who mourned for sin, and live mortified to the pleasures and vanities of the world, was contrary to their notions, who placed their highest happiness in

worldly and carnal things. So also that they who were meek, were blessed, was another doctrine very contrary to their notions, who were a very haughty, proud nation, and very revengeful, and maintained the lawfulness of private revenge, as may be seen in the 38th verse. Equally strange to them was the declaration that they who hungered and thirsted after righteousness were happy; for they placed their happiness, not in possessing a high degree of righteousness, but in having a great share of worldly good. They were wont to labour for the meat that perisheth, they had no notion of any such thing as spiritual riches, or of happiness in satisfying a spiritual appetite. The Jews were dreadfully in the dark at that day about spiritual things. The happiness which they expected by the Messiah was a temporal and carnal, and not a spiritual happiness. Christ also tells them that they were blessed who were merciful, and who were peace-makers; which was also a doctrine that the Jews especially stood in need of at that day, for they were generally of a cruel, unmerciful, persecuting spirit.

The truth which Christ teaches them in the text, that they were blessed who were pure in heart, was a thing wholly beyond their conceptions. The Jews at this time placed almost the whole of religion in external things, in a conformity to the rites and ceremonies of the law of Moses. They laid great stress on tithing mint, and anise, and cumin, and on their traditions, as in washing hands before meat, and the like; but they neglected the weightier matters of the law, and especially such as respected holiness of heart. They took much more care to have clean hands, and a clean outside, than á clean heart, as Christ tells them, Matth. xxiii. 25, 27. "Wo unto you, scribes, and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within ye are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee! cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also."

We may observe concerning the words of the text,

1. That Christ pronounces the pure in heart, blessed. Christ here accommodates his instructions to the human nature. He knew that all mankind were in the pursuit of happiness, he has directed them in the true way to it, and he tells them what they must become in order to be blessed and happy.

2. He gives the reason why such are blessed, or wherein the blessedness of such consists; that they shall see God. It is probable the Jews supposed that it was a great privilege to see God, from those passages in the law, where there is an account of Moses' earnestly desiring to see God's glory; and from the account that is given of the seventy elders, Exod. xxiv. 9, 10, 11, "Then went up Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel; and they saw the God of Israel; and there was

under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

It is also probable that they had very imperfect notions of what the vision of God was, and of the happiness that consisted in it, and that their notion of this matter, agreeably to the rest of their carnal, childish notions, was of some outwardly splendid and glorious sight, to please the eye and to entertain the fancy. From these words I shall derive two propositions.

I. It is a truly blessed thing to the soul of man to see God.

II. To be pure in heart, is the certain and only way to attain to this blessedness.

I. It is a truly blessed thing to the soul of man to see God. Here I shall attempt to show,

1. What is meant by seeing God.

First. It is not any sight with the bodily eyes: the blessedness of the soul does not enter in at that door. This would make the blessedness of the soul dependent on the body, or the happiness of man's superior part dependent on the inferior; and this would have confirmed the carnal and childish notions of the Jews.

God is a spirit, and is not to be seen with the bodily eyes. We find it attributed to God, that he is invisible. Heb. xi. 27. "As seeing him, who is invisible." Col. i. 15. "Who is the image of the invisible God." It is mentioned as a part of God's glory, 1 Tim. i. 17, "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." That it is not any sight with the bodily eyes, is evident, because the unembodied souls of the saints see God, and the angels also, who are spirits and were never united to bodies. Matth. xviii. 10. "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones: for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."

It is not any form nor visible representation, nor shape, nor colour, nor shining light, that is seen, wherein this great happiness of the soul consists. Indeed God was wont to manifest himself of old in outward glorious appearances. There was a shining light that was called the glory of the Lord. Thus the glory of the Lord was said to descend on mount Sinai, and in the tabernacle of the congregation. There was an outward visible token of God's presence, and the seventy elders, when they saw God in the mount, saw a visible shape. It seems also that when Moses desired to see God's glory, and when God passed by and covered him with his hand in the cleft of the rock, that Moses saw some visible glory. Exod. xxxiii. 18—23. "And he said, I beseech thee show me thy glory. And he said, I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name

of the Lord before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face; for there shall no man see me and live." But it seems that God then condescended to the infant state of the church, and to the childish notions that were entertained in those days of lesser light; and Moses' request seems to have been answered, by God making his goodness to pass before him, and proclaiming his name and giving him a strong apprehension of the things contained in that name, rather than by showing him any outward glory.

The saints in heaven will behold an outward glory as they are in the human nature of Christ, which is united to the godhead, as it is the body of that person who is God; and there will doubtless be appearances of a divine, and inimitable glory and beauty in Christ's glorified body, which it will indeed be a refreshing and blessed sight to see.

But the beauty of Christ's body as seen by the bodily eyes, will be ravishing and delightful, chiefly as it will express his spiritual glory. The majesty that will appear in Christ's body, will express and show forth the spiritual greatness and majesty of the divine nature; the pureness, and beauty of that light and glory will express the perfection of the divine holiness; the sweetness and ravishing mildness of his countenance, will express his divine and spiritual love and grace.

Thus it was when the three disciples beheld Christ at his transfiguration upon the mount. They beheld a wonderful outward glory in Christ's body, an inexpressible beauty in his countenance; but that outward glory and beauty delighted them principally as an expression of the divine excellencies of his mind, as we may see from their manner of speaking of it. It was the sweet mixture of majesty and grace in his countenance, by which they were ravished. 2 Peter i. 16, 17, 18. "We were eye witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount." But especially from the account which John gives of it. John i. 14. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth;" where John very probably had in his mind what he had seen in the mount at the transfiguration. Grace and truth are not outward, but spiritual, glories.

Secondly. It is an intellectual view by which God is seen. God is a spiritual being, and he is beheld with the understanding. The soul has in itself those powers which are capable of appre-

hending objects, and especially spiritual objects, without looking through the windows of the outward senses. This is a more perfect way of perception than by the eyes of the body. We are so accustomed and habituated to depend upon our senses, and our intellectual powers are so neglected and disused, that we are ready to conceive that seeing things with the bodily eyes is the most perfect way of apprehending them. But it is not so; the eye of the soul is vastly more perfect than the eye of the body, yet it is not every apprehension of God by the understanding that may be called the seeing of him. As,

1st. The having an apprehension of God merely by hearsay. If we hear of such a being as God, are educated in the belief that there is such a being, are told what sort of being he is, and what he has done, and are rightly told, and we give credit to what we hear; yet if we have no apprehension of God in any other way, we cannot be said to see God in the sense of the text. This is not the beatific sight of God.

2d. If we have an apprehension of God merely by speculative reasoning. If we come to some apprehension of God's being, and of his being Almighty, all-wise and good, by ratiocination, that is not what the scripture calls seeing God. It is some more immediate way of understanding and viewing that is called sight; nor will such an apprehension as this merely ever make the soul truly blessed. Nor,

3d. Is every more immediate and sensible apprehension of God, that seeing of him mentioned in the text, and that which is truly beatific. The wicked spirits in the other world have doubtless more immediate apprehensions of the being of God, and of his power and wrath, than the wicked in this world. They stand before God to be judged, they receive the sentence from him, they have a dreadful apprehension of his wrath and displeasure. But yet they are exceedingly remote from seeing God, in the sense of the text.

But to see God, is this. It is to have an immediate, sensible, and certain understanding of God's glorious excellency and love.

1st. There must be a *direct* and *immediate* sense of God's glory and excellency. I say direct and immediate, to distinguish it from a mere perception that God is glorious and excellent by means of speculative and distant argumentation, which is a more indirect way of apprehending things. A true sense of the glory of God is that which can never be obtained by speculative ratiocination; and if men convince themselves by argument that God is holy, that never will give a sense of his amiable and glorious holiness. If they argue that he is very merciful, that will not give a sense of his glorious grace and

mercy. It must be a more immediate, sensible discovery that must give the mind a real sense of the excellency and beauty of God. He that sees God, has a direct and immediate view of God's great and awful majesty, of his pure and beauteous holiness, of his wonderful and endearing grace and mercy.

2d. There is a certain understanding of his love, there is a certain apprehension of his presence. He that beholds God, does not merely see him as present by his essence, for so he is present with all, both godly and ungodly. But he is more especially present with those whom he loves, he is graciously present with them; and when they see him, they see him, and know him to be so; they have an understanding of his love to them; they see him from love manifesting himself to them. He that has a blessed-making sight of God, not only has a view of God's glory and excellency, but he views it as having a property in it; he sees God's love to him; he receives the testimonies and manifestations of that love.

God's favour is sometimes in scripture called his face: Ps. cxix. 58, where it is translated, "I entreated *thy favour* with my whole heart;" it is in the original "*thy face;*" and God's *hiding his face*, is a very common expression to signify his withholding the testimonies of his favour.

To see God, as in the text, implies the sight of him as glorious and as gracious; a vision of the light of his countenance, both as it is understood of the effulgence of his glory, and the manifestations of his favour and love.

The discoveries which the saints have in this world of the glory and love of God, are often in scripture called the sight of God. Thus it is said of Abraham, that he saw him who is invisible. Heb. xi. 27. So the saints are said to see as in a glass the glory of the Lord. 2 Cor. iii. 18. "But we all with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." Christ speaks of the spiritual knowledge of God. John xiv. 7. "If ye had known me, ye would have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know him, and have seen him." The saints in this world have an earnest of what is future, they have the dawnings of future light.

But the more perfect view which the saints have of God's glory and love in another world, is what is especially called the seeing of God. Then they shall see him as he is. That light which now is but a glimmering, will be brought to clear sunshine; that which is here but the dawning, will become perfect day.

Those intellectual views which will be granted in another world, are called seeing God.

1st. Because the view will be very direct; as when we see things with the bodily eyes. God will, as it were, immediately discover himself to their minds, so that the understanding shall behold the glory and love of God, as a man beholds the countenance of his friend. The discoveries which the saints here have of God's excellency and grace, are immediate in a sense; that is, they do not mainly consist in ratiocination; but yet in another sense they are indirect, that is, they are by means of the gospel, as through a glass; but in heaven God will immediately excite apprehensions of himself, without the use of any such means.

2d. It is called seeing, because it will be most certain. When persons see a thing with their own eyes, it gives them the greatest certainty they can have of it, greater than they can have by any information of others. So the sight that they will have in heaven will exclude all doubting. The knowledge of God which the saints have in this world, has certainty in it, but yet the certainty is liable to be interrupted with temptations, and some degree of doubtings, but there is no such thing in heaven. The looking at the sun does not give a greater nor fuller certainty that it shines.

3d. It is called seeing, because the apprehension of God's glory and love is as clear and lively as when any thing is seen with bodily eyes. When we are actually beholding any thing with our eyes in the meridian light of the sun, it does not give a more lively idea and apprehension of it than the saints in heaven have of the divine excellency and love of God. When we are looking upon things our idea is much more clear and perfect, and the impression stronger on the soul, than when we only think of a thing absent. But the intellectual views that the saints in heaven will have of God, will have far the advantage of bodily sight, it will be a much more perfect way of apprehending. The saints in heaven will see the glory of the body of Christ after the resurrection with bodily eyes, but they will have no more immediate and perfect way of seeing that visible glory than they will of beholding Christ's divine and spiritual glory. They will not want eyes to see that which is spiritual, as well as we can see any thing that is corporeal; they will behold God in an ineffable, and to us now inconceivable manner.

4th. The intellectual sight which the saints will have of God will make them as sensible of his presence, and give them as great advantages for conversing with him, as the sight of the bodily eyes doth an earthly friend; yea, and more too; for when we see our earthly friends with bodily eyes, we have not the most full and direct sight of their principal part, even their souls. We see the qualities, and dispositions, and acts of their minds no otherwise than by outward signs of speech and behaviour; strictly speaking,

we do not see the man, the soul, at all, but only its tabernacle or dwelling.

But their souls will have the most clear sight of the spiritual nature of God itself. They shall behold his attributes and disposition towards them more immediately, and therefore with greater certainty, than it is possible to see any thing in the soul of an earthly friend by his speech and behaviour; and therefore their spiritual sight will give them greater advantage for conversing with God, than the sight of earthly friends with bodily eyes, or hearing them with our ears gives us for conversing with them.

2. I shall now give the reasons why the thus seeing God is that which will make the soul truly happy.

First. It yields a delight suitable to the nature of an intelligent creature. God hath made man, and man only, of all the creatures here below, an intelligent creature; and his reason and understanding are that by which he is distinguished from all inferior ranks of beings. Man's reason is, as it were, an heavenly ray, or, in the language of the wise man, it is "the candle of the Lord." It is that wherein mainly consists the natural image of God, it is the noblest faculty of man, it is that which ought to bear rule over the other powers; being given for that end, that it might govern the soul.

Therefore those delights are most suitable to the nature of man, that are intellectual, which result from the exercises of this noblest, this distinguishing faculty. God, by giving man understanding, made him capable of such delights, and fitted him for them, and designed that such pleasures as those should be his happiness.

Intellectual pleasures consist in the beholding of spiritual excellencies and beauties, but the glorious excellency and beauty of God are far the greatest. God's excellence is the supreme excellence. When the understanding of the reasonable creature dwells here, it dwells at the fountain, and swims in a boundless, bottomless ocean. The love of God is also the most suitable entertainment of the soul of man, which naturally desires the happiness of society, or of union with some other being. The love of so glorious a being is infinitely valuable, and the discoveries of it are capable of ravishing the soul above all other love. It is suitable to the nature of an intelligent being also, as it is that kind of delight that reason approves of. There are many other delights in which men indulge themselves, which, although they are pleasing to the senses and inferior powers, yet are contrary to reason; reason opposes the enjoyment of them, so that unless reason be suppressed and stifled, they cannot be enjoyed without a war in the soul. Reason, the noblest faculty, resists the inferior rebellious powers; and the more reason is in exercise, the more will it resist, and the greater will be the inward war and opposition.

But this delight of seeing God the understanding approves of; it is a thing most agreeable to reason that the soul should delight itself in this, and the more reason is in exercise, the more it approves of it. So that when it is enjoyed, it is with inward peace, and a sweet tranquillity of soul; there is nothing in human nature that is opposite to it, but every thing agrees and conforms to it.

Secondly. The pleasure which the soul has in seeing God, is not only its delight, but it is at the same time its highest perfection and excellency. Man's true happiness is his perfection and true excellency. When any reasonable creature finds that his excellency and his joy are the same thing, then he is come to right and real happiness, and not before. If a man enjoys any kind of pleasure and lives in it, how much soever he may be taken with what he enjoys, yet if he be not the more excellent for his pleasures, it is a certain sign that he is not a truly happy man. There are many pleasures that men are wont violently to pursue, which are no part of their dignity or perfection, but which, on the contrary, debase the man and make him vile. Instead of rendering the mind beautiful and lovely, they only serve to pollute it; instead of exalting its nature, they make it more a-kin to that of beasts.

But it is quite the contrary with the pleasure that is to be enjoyed in seeing God. To see God is the highest honour and dignity to which the human nature can attain; that intellectual beholding of him is itself the highest excellency of the understanding. The great part of the excellency of man is his knowledge and understanding; but the knowledge of God is the most excellent and noble kind of knowledge.

The delight and joy of the soul in that sight are the highest excellency of the other faculty, viz. the will. The heart of man cannot be brought to a higher excellency than to have delight in God, and complacency in the divine excellency and glory. The soul, while it remains under the power of corruption and depravity, cannot have any delight in God's glory; and when its moral relish is so far changed that it is disposed to delight in it, it is most excellently disposed; and when it actually exercises delight in God, it is the most noble and exalted exercise of which it is capable. So that the soul's seeing of God, and having pleasure and joy in the sight, is the greatest excellency of both the faculties.

Thirdly. The happiness of seeing God is a blessing without any mixture. That pleasure has the best claim to be called man's true happiness, which comes unmixed, and without alloy. But so doth the joy of seeing God; it neither brings any bitterness, nor will it suffer any.

1. This pleasure brings no bitterness with it. That is not the case with other delights, in which natural men are wont to place their happiness; they are bitter sweets, yielding a kind of momentary pleasure in gratifying an appetite, but wormwood and gall are mingled in the cup. He who plucks these roses, finds that they grow on thorns; he who tastes of this honey is sure to find in it a sting. If men place their happiness in them, reason and conscience will certainly give them inward disturbance in their enjoyment. There will be the sting of continual disappointments, for carnal delights are of such a nature that they keep the soul, that places its happiness in them, always big with expectation and in eager pursuit; while they are evermore like shadows, and never yield what is hoped for. They who give themselves up to them, unavoidably bring upon themselves many heavy inconveniences. If they promote their pleasure in one way, they destroy their comforts in many other ways; and this sting ever accompanies them, that they are but short-lived, they will soon vanish, and be no more.

And as to the pleasure found in the enjoyment of earthly friends, there is a bitterness goes also with that. An intense love to any earthly object, though it may afford high enjoyment, yet greatly multiplies our cares and anxieties through the defects and blemishes, the instability and changeableness of the object, the calamities to which it is exposed, and the short duration of all such friendships, and of the pleasures thence arising.

Some men take a great deal of pleasure in study, in the increase of knowledge; but Solomon, who had great experience, long ago observed that this also is vanity, because he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Eccles. i. 17, 18. "And I gave my heart to know wisdom, and to know madness and folly: I perceived that this also is vexation of spirit. For in much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow." But the delight which the sight of God affords to the soul, brings no bitterness with it, there is no disappointment accompanies it, it promises not more than it yields, but on the contrary the pleasure is greater than could be imagined before God was seen. It brings no sting of conscience along with it, it brings no vexing care nor anxiety, it leaves no loathing nor disrelish behind it.

There is nothing in God which gives uneasiness to him, who beholds him. The view of one attribute adds to the joy that is raised by another. A sight of the holiness of God, gives unspeakable pleasure to the mind, the idea of it is a perception beyond measure the most delightful that can exist in a created mind. And then the beholding of God's grace adds to this joy, for the soul then considers that the Being who is so amiable in himself, is so

communicative, so disposed to love and benevolence. The view of the majesty of God greatly heightens this joy: to behold such grace and goodness, and such goodness and majesty united together. Especially will the sight of God's love to himself, the person beholding, increase the pleasure, when he considers that so great and glorious a being loves him, and is his God and friend. Again, the beholding of God's infinite power will still add to the pleasure, for he reflects that he, who is his friend, and loves him with so great a love, can do all things for him. So the beholding of his wisdom, because he thereby knows what is best for him, and knows how so to order things, as shall make him most blessed. So the consideration of his eternity and immutability; it will rejoice him to think that his friend and his portion is an eternal, and unchangeable friend and portion. The beholding of God's happiness will increase the joy, to consider that he is so happy, who is so much the object of his love. That love of God, in those who shall see God, will cause them exceedingly to rejoice in the happiness of God. Even the sight of God's vindictive justice will add to their joy. This justice of God will appear glorious to them, and will make them prize his love.

2d. This joy is without mixture, not only as it brings not bitterness with it, but also as it will not suffer any. The sight of God excludes every thing that is of a nature different from delight. This light is such, as wholly excludes darkness.

It is not in the power of any earthly enjoyment, to drive and shut out all trouble from the heart. If a man has some things in which he takes comfort and pleasure, there are others that yield him uneasiness and sorrow; if he has some things in the world that are sweet there are others that are bitter, against which it is not in the power of his pleasures to help him. We never can find any thing here below that shall make us so happy, but that we shall have grief and pleasure mixed together. This world, let us make the best of it, will be spotted with black and white, varied with clouds and sunshine, and to them who yield their hearts to it, it will yield pain as well as pleasure. But this pleasure of seeing God can suffer no mixture; for this pleasure of seeing God is so great and strong that it takes the full possession of the heart, it fills it perfectly full, so that there shall be no room for any sorrow, no room in any corner for any thing of an adverse nature from joy. There is no darkness that can bear such powerful light. It is impossible that they who see God face to face, who behold his glory and love so immediately as they do in heaven, should have any such thing as grief or pain in their hearts. When once the saints are come into God's presence, tears shall be wiped from their eyes, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. The pleasure will be so great, as fully and perfectly to employ every faculty; the sight of God's glory and

love will be so wonderful, so engaging to the mind, and it shall keep all the powers of it in such strong attention, that the soul will be wholly possessed and taken up.

Again. There will be in what they shall see, a sufficient antidote against every thing that would afford uneasiness, or that can have any tendency thereto. If there were sin in the heart before, that used by its exercise to disturb its peace and quiet, and was a seed and spring of trouble, the immediate and full sight of God's glory will at once drive it all away. Sin cannot remain in the heart which thus beholds God, for sin is a principle of enmity against God; but there can no enmity remain in one, who after this manner sees God's glory. It must and will wholly drive away any such principle, and change it into love. The imperfect sight that the saints have of God's glory here, transforms them in part into the same image; but this perfect sight will transform them perfectly. If there be the hatred of enemies, the vision of the love and power of God will be a sufficient antidote against it; so that it can give no uneasiness. If the saint is removed by death from all his earthly friends, and earthly enjoyments, that will give no uneasiness to him, when he sees what a fulness there is in God. He will see that there is all in him, so that he who possesses him can lose nothing: whatever is taken from him he sustains no loss. And whatever else there may be, that would otherwise afford grief and uneasiness to the soul, it cannot affect him who is in the presence of God and sees his face.

Fourthly. This joy of seeing God is the true blessedness of man, because the fountain that supplies it is equal to man's desire and capacity.

When God gave man his capacity of happiness, he doubtless made provision for the filling of it. There was some good which God had in his eye, when he made the vessel, and made it of such dimensions, which he knew to be sufficient to fill it; and doubtless that whatever it be, is man's true blessedness; and that good which is found not to be commensurate to man's capacity and natural desires, and never can equal it, is certainly not that wherein man's happiness consists. Man's desires and capacities are commensurate one with another. When once the capacity is filled, the soul desires no more.

Now in order to judge how great man's capacity is, we must consider the capacity of his principal and leading faculty, viz. his understanding. So great as is the capacity of that faculty, so great is man's capacity of enjoyment; so great a good as the soul is capable of understanding, so great a good it is capable of enjoying. As great a good as the soul is capable of comprehending in its perception and idea, so great a good is it capable of re-

ceiving with the other faculty, the will, which keeps pace with the understanding; and that good which the soul can receive with both faculties, of that is it capable of being made the possessor and enjoyer.

But it is easy to perceive that there is nothing here below that can give men such delight as shall be equal to this faculty. Let a man enjoy as great an affluence of earthly comforts as he will, still there is room; man's nature is capable of a great deal more, there are certain things wanting to which the understanding can extend itself, which he could wish were added.

But the fountain that supplies that joy and delight, which the soul has in seeing God, is sufficient to fill the vessel, because it is infinite. He that sees the glory of God, in his measure beholds that of which there is no end. The understanding may extend itself as far as it will; it doth but take its flight into an endless expanse, and dive into a bottomless ocean. It may discover more and more of the beauty and loveliness of God, but it never will exhaust the fountain. The body of man may as well swallow up the ocean, or his soul embrace immensity, as he can extend his faculties to the utmost of God's excellency.

So in like manner it may be said of the love of God. We can never by soaring and ascending, come to the height of it; we can never by descending come to the depth of it; or by measuring, know the length and breadth of it. Eph. iii. 18, 19. "That ye may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge; that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." So that let the thoughts and desires extend themselves as they will, here is space enough for them, in which they may expand for ever. How blessed therefore are they that do see God, who are come to this exhaustless fountain! They have obtained that delight which gives full satisfaction; having come to this pleasure, they neither do nor can desire any more. They can sit down fully contented, and take up with this enjoyment for ever and ever, and desire no change. After they have had the pleasure of beholding the face of God millions of ages, it will not grow a dull story; the relish of this delight will be as exquisite as ever, there is enough still for the utmost employment of every faculty.

Fifthly. This delight in the vision of God hath an unfailing foundation. God made man to endure for ever, and therefore that which is man's true blessedness, we may conclude has a sure and lasting foundation. As to worldly enjoyments, their foundation is a sandy one that is continually wearing away, and certainly will at last let the building fall. If we take pleasure in riches, riches in a little while will be gone; if we take pleasure in gratify-

ing our senses, those objects whence we draw our gratifications will perish with the using; and our senses themselves also will be gone, the organs will be worn out, and our whole outward form will turn to dust. If we take pleasure in union with our earthly friends, that union must be broken; the bonds are not durable, but will soon wear asunder.

But he who has the immediate intellectual vision of God's glory and love, and rejoices in that, has his happiness built upon an everlasting rock. Isaiah xxvi. 4. "Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength." In the Hebrew it is, "in the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of ages."

The glory of God is subject to no changes nor vicissitudes, it will never cease to shine forth. History gives us an account of the sun's light failing, and becoming more faint and dim for many months together; but the glory of God will never be subject to fade. Of the light of that Sun there never will be any eclipse or dimness, but it will shine eternally in its strength. Isaiah lx. 19. "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory." So the love of God, to those who see his face, will never fail, or be subject to any abatement: he loves his saints with an everlasting love. Jer. xxxi. 3. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Those streams of pleasure which are at God's right hand, are never dry, but ever flowing, and ever full.

How much doth the sense of the sureness of this foundation confirm and heighten the joy! The soul enjoys its delight in a sense of this, free from all fears and jealousies, and with an unspeakable quietness and assurance. Isaiah xxxii. 17. "And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever."

From this part of the subject we may derive several important and useful reflections.

1. Here we may see one instance wherein the revelation of Jesus Christ excels all human wisdom. It was a thing that had been beyond the wisdom of the world, to tell wherein man's true happiness consisted; there was a vast variety of opinions about it among the wise men and philosophers of the heathen; indeed on no other subject was there so great difference among them. If I remember right, there were several hundred different opinions reckoned up respecting it, which shows that they were wofully in the dark. Though there were many very wise men among them, men famed through all succeeding ages for their knowledge and

wisdom; yet their reason was not sufficient to find out man's true happiness.

We can give reasons for it now that it is revealed, and it seems so rational, that one would think the light of nature sufficient to discover it; but we, having always lived in the enjoyment of gospel light, and being accustomed to it, are hardly sensible how dependent we are upon it, and how much we should be in the dark about things that now seem plain to us, if we never had had our reason assisted by revelation.

God hath made foolish the wisdom of this world by the gospel. 1 Cor. i. 20. "Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world?" i. e. he hath shown the foolishness of their wisdom by this brighter light of his revelation. For all that philosophy and human wisdom could do, it was the gospel that first taught the world wherein mankind's true blessedness consisted, and that taught them the way to attain to it.

2. Hence we learn the great privilege we have, who possess such advantages to come to the blessedness of seeing God. We have the true God revealed to us in the word of God, who is the Being in the sight of whom this happiness is to be enjoyed. We have the glorious attributes and perfections of God declared to us. The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ is discovered in the gospel which we enjoy, his beauties and glories are there as it were pointed forth by God's own hand to our view: so that we have those means which God hath provided for our obtaining those beginnings of this sight of him which the saints have in this world, in that spiritual knowledge which they have of God, which is absolutely necessary in order to our having it perfectly in another world.

The knowledge which believers have of God and his glory, as appearing in the face of Christ, is the imperfect beginning of this heavenly sight, it is an earnest of it, it is the dawning of the heavenly light; and this beginning must evermore precede, or a perfect vision of God in heaven cannot be obtained; and all those that have this beginning, shall obtain that perfection also. Great therefore is our privilege, that we have the means of this spiritual knowledge. We may in this world see God as in a glass darkly, in order to our seeing him hereafter face to face; and surely our privilege is very great, that he has given us that glass from whence God's glory is reflected. We have not only the discoveries of God's glory in the doctrines of his word, but we have abundant directions how to act, so that we may obtain a perfect and beatific sight of God; of one of which we have in our text, and of which I shall speak particularly hereafter.

3. This Doctrine may lead us to a sense of the blessedness of the heavenly state, and justly cause us to long after it. In heaven the saints do see God, they enjoy that vision of him of which we have been speaking in its perfection. All clouds and darkness are there removed, they there behold the glory and love of God more immediately, and with greater certainty, and a more strong and lively apprehension, than a man beholds his friend when he is with him and sees his face by the noon day sun, and with far greater advantages for conversation and enjoyment.

Well may this make the heavenly state appear a blessed state to us, and make us to breathe after it; well may the consideration of these things make the saints wait for and desire their happy change; well may it make them long for the appearing of Christ. This they know, that when he shall appear, they shall "see him as he is." 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

This may well be comforting to the saints under the apprehensions of death, and it is a consideration sufficient to take away the sting of it, and uphold them while walking through the midst of that valley. This also may well comfort and uphold them in all troubles and difficulties they meet with here, that after a little while they shall see God; which will immediately dry up all tears, and drive away all sorrow and sighing, and expel for ever every darksome thought from the heart.

4. Hence we learn that a life of holiness is the pleasantest life in this world, because in such a life we have the imperfect beginnings of a blessed and endless sight of God; and so they have somewhat of true happiness while here, they have the seeds of blessedness sown in their souls, and they begin to shoot forth.

As for all others, those who do not live a holy life, they have nothing at all of true happiness, because they have nothing of the knowledge of God.

II. To be pure in heart, is the certain and only way to attain to this blessedness.

We have shown what this seeing of God is, and have represented in some measure how great is the blessedness of so seeing him; and if what we have heard is believed and cordially received by us, it will be sufficient to awaken our attention to any instructions from the word of God that are to point out the way to us wherein we may attain to this blessedness.

If men should hear of some vast estate, or some rich hidden treasure, and at the same time should hear of some very feasible way in which they might make it all their own; how ready would they be to hear, with what eagerness would they listen to those who should

bring such news and give them such directions, provided they had reason to believe that what was told them was true! We are here told of a much truer and greater blessedness, than any treasure of silver, and gold, and pearls can yield; and we are also told of the way whereby we may assuredly become the possessors of it, by him who certainly knows. I shall show,

1. What it is to be pure in heart.

2. That to be pure in heart, is the sure way to gain this blessedness.

3. That it is the only way.

1. I shall inquire, what it is to be pure in heart. Purity of heart is here to be understood in distinction from a mere external purity, or a purity of the outward actions and behaviour in those things that appear to men in an external morality, and an outward attendance on ordinances, and a profession of the true religion and pure doctrines, and a making an outward show and appearance of godliness.

Christ had very probably in our text an eye to the formality and hypocrisy of the scribes, and Pharisees, and other great saints, as they accounted themselves, and were accounted among the Jews. These were exceedingly exact in their observance of the ordinances of the ceremonial law, they were careful not to deviate from it in the least punctilio. For instance, how exact were they in observing the law of tithes; they were careful to bring the tenth of the herbs in their gardens as mint, anise, and cumin. They were very careful to keep themselves from all ceremonial uncleanness, and they even added to the law in this particular; they were for being stricter and purer than the law required, and therefore made conscience of washing their hands before every meal. They were very strict to avoid conversing with the Samaritans; they would not eat with them, nor have any dealings with them, lest they should be defiled. They used to say to other nations, "Stand by thyself, come not nigh, for I am holier than thou." They looked upon themselves only as pure, because they were the children of Abraham, and because they were circumcised, and attended the ceremonial law; because they made clean the outside of the cup and the platter, and because of their external purity, they looked upon themselves as the peculiar favourites of heaven, and expected to be admitted to see God when all the uncircumcised, and those that were not the children of Abraham, should be excluded.

But Christ corrects this their mistake, and teaches that such an eternal purity will never give a man a title to this blessedness, for it is purity of heart that is requisite in order to attain to it. Matt. v. 20. "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

However exact any man may be in the external observance of moral, instituted duties, if he be careful to wrong no man, and can say, as the young Pharisee did, "All these have I kept from my youth," i. e. as to an external observance, if he be very strict in keeping the Sabbath and in coming to the house of God, in attending family and secret prayer, yet if he has not holiness of heart, he is never like to see God. It is no reformation of manners that is sufficient, but there must be a new heart, and a right spirit. It is the heart that God requires. Prov. xxiii. 26. "My son, give me thine heart." It is the heart that God looks at. However fair and pure an outside there may be, that may be very pleasing to men, yet if there be not purity of heart, the man is not at all the more acceptable to God. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. "But the Lord said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him; for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." If men outwardly behave well and speak well, yet it is not accepted without trying and weighing the heart. Prov. xvi. 2. "All the ways of man are clean in his own eyes, but the Lord weigheth the spirits." It is the spirit which is the subject of this blessedness of seeing God, and therefore the qualities of the spirit, and not so much those of the outward man, are regarded.

Now the heart is said to be pure in the sense of the text,

First. With respect to the spiritual defilement from which it is pure;

Secondly. With respect to certain positive qualities that it is endowed with.

The word *pure*, in its common acceptation, merely signifies something negative, viz. the absence of all mixture or defilement; but in pureness of heart, as it is used in scripture, seems to be implied both something negative and positive, not only the absence or removal of defilement, but also positive qualities, that are called pure.

First. The heart is said to be pure with respect to the filthiness from which it is pure. Sin is the greatest filthiness. There is nothing that can so defile and render so abominable. It is that which has an infinite abominableness in it; and indeed it is the only spiritual defilement; there is nothing else that can defile the soul. Now there are none in this life who are pure from sin in such a sense that there is no remainder, no mixture of sin. Prov. xx. 9. "Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?" So that if this were the requisite qualification, none of the children of men would ever come to see God.

But the purity of heart with respect to sin, that may be obtained in this life, consists in the following things:

1st. It implies that the soul sees the filthiness that there is in sin, and accordingly abhors it. Sin, that is so filthy in itself, is become so sensibly to the man whose heart is pure; he sees its odiousness and deformity, and it is become nauseous to him.

To those animals which are of a filthy and impure nature, as swine and dogs, ravens and vermin, those things that are filthy and nauseous to mankind, do not seem at all disgusting; but on the contrary they love them, it is food that suits their appetites. It is because they are of an impure and filthy nature; the nature of the animal is agreeable to such things. So it is with men of impure hearts. They see no filthiness in sin, they do not nauseate it, it is in no way uncomfortable to them to have it hanging about them, they can wallow in it without any reluctance; yea, they take pleasure in it, it is their meat and their drink, because they are of an impure nature. But he who has become pure in heart hates sin; he has an antipathy to it; he does not love to be near it; if he sees any of it hanging about him, he abhors himself for it; he seems filthy to himself, he is a burden to himself, he abhors the very sight of it, and shuns the appearance of it. If he sees sin in others, it is a very unpleasant sight to him; as sin, and as committed against God, it is grievous and uncomfortable to him wherever he discovers it. It is because his heart is changed, and God has given him a pure nature.

2d. It implies godly sorrow for sin. The pure heart has not only respect to that spiritual filthiness that is present to abhor it and shun it, but it has also respect to past sin. The consideration of that grieves it; it causes shame and sorrow to think that it ever rejoiced in such defilement, that it ever was so abominable as to love it and feed upon it. Every transgression leaves a filth behind it upon the soul, and this remaining filth occasions pain to the renewed and purified heart. By godly sorrow the heart exerts itself against the filthiness of past sins, and does, as it were, endeavour to cast it off, and purge itself from it.

3d. It implies that sin is mortified in the heart, so that it is free from the reigning power and dominion of it. Though the heart is not perfectly free from all sin, yet a freedom is begun. Before, spiritual filth had the possession of the heart, corruption had the entire government of the soul, every faculty was so wholly defiled by it, that all its acts were filthy, and only filthy, the heart was entirely enslaved to sin.

But now the power of sin is broken, the strong bands by which it was tied and fastened to the heart are in a great measure loosed, so that corruption has no longer the possession and government of the heart as before. The principal seat, the throne of the heart, that was formerly possessed by corruption, is now purged, and filthiness does now as it were only possess the inferior and

exterior parts of the soul. John xiii. 10. "He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet."

4th. The heart that is pure will be continually endeavouring to cleanse itself from all remaining filthiness. Though there be remains of impurity, yet the new nature is so contrary to it that it will never rest or be quiet, but will always be cleansing itself; like a vessel of fermenting liquor, it will continue working, till it has worked itself clear, and cast off all the filth, and sediment. Or like a stream of good water, if the water be in itself sweet and good, however it may be defiled from the muddy banks, it will refine as it runs, and will run itself clear again, but the fountain that yields impure water will never cleanse itself. So he who is pure in heart will never suffer himself to live in any sin. If he be overtaken in a fault he will return and cleanse himself again by repentance, and reformation, and a more earnest care that he may avoid that sin for the future.

The remaining corruption that is in his heart will be his great and continual burden, and he will be endeavouring to cleanse himself more and more; he will not rest in any supposed degree of purity, so long as he sees any degree of impurity remaining, but he will be striving after progress in the mortification of sin and in the increase of holiness.

5th. The heart is said to be pure, especially with respect to its cleanness from, and opposition to, the lust of uncleanness. This kind of wickedness we find to be more especially called uncleanness and filthiness in scripture; it brings a peculiar turpitude upon the soul, and defiles the temple of God. 1 Cor. iii. 17. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy: for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Pureness in scripture is sometimes used only in this restrained sense, with respect to freedom from fleshly impurities. So it seems to be, Philip. iv. 8. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Now this sort of purity of heart is absolutely necessary in order to our coming to see God. There must be a renunciation of all impure and lascivious practices and conversation. They who live in the indulgence of such a lust in one kind of practice or another, or though it be only with their eyes or in their thoughts, are of impure hearts, and shall never come to see God unless they have new hearts given them.

They that have pure hearts, abhor and are afraid of such things. Jude 23. They take heed that they do not prostitute their souls to

so much as mental and imaginary, much less to practical, impurities, and works of darkness.

Secondly. The heart is said to be pure, in respect to its being endowed with positive qualities, that are of a contrary nature to spiritual filthiness.

Though purity in strictness be only a freedom from filth, yet there are positive qualities of mind that seem to be implied in purity of heart; which may be reckoned a part of it, because of their contrariety to filthiness. The heart by reason of them is still more remote from defilement, as a greater light may be said to be purer than a lesser; for although the lesser light has no mixture of darkness, yet the greater light is still more remote from darkness.

1st. He is pure in heart, who delights in holy exercises. Those exercises that are holy are natural and pleasant to him, he sees the beauty there is in holiness, and that beauty has such strong influence upon his heart that he is captivated thereby. He delights in the pure and holy exercise of love to God, in the fear of God, in praising and glorifying God, and in pure and holy love to men. He delights in holy thoughts and meditations. Those exercises of the understanding that are holy, are most agreeable to him, and those exercises of the will. Such inclinations, desires, and affections, are most delightful, which are spiritual and holy.

2d. He is pure in heart, who chooses and takes the greatest delight in spiritual enjoyment. A spiritual appetite is that which governs in his soul, and carries him above the mean lust and defiled enjoyments of this world, towards spiritual and heavenly objects. The enjoyments which he chooses and chiefly desires, such as seeing God and enjoying communion with him, are enjoyments of the most refined and pure nature. He hungers and thirsts after the pure light of the New Jerusalem.

2. To be pure in heart is the sure way to obtain the blessedness of seeing God. This is the divine road to the blissful and glorious presence of God, which, if we take it, will infallibly lead us thither.

God is the giver of the pure heart, and he gives it for this very end; that it may be prepared for the blessedness of seeing him. Thus we are taught in the scriptures. The people of God are sanctified, and their hearts are made pure, that they may be prepared for glory, as vessels are prepared by the potter for the use he designs. They are elected from all eternity to eternal life, and have purity of heart given them, on purpose to fit them for that to which they are chosen. Rom. ix. 23. "And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared to glory."

We read of the church being arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, by which is signified the church's purity; and it was to fit it for the enjoyment of Christ. Rev. xix. 7, 8. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready; and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints." And in the xxi. chap. 2 verse, the church thus purified, is said to be as a bride adorned for her husband. "And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Therefore if God gives the pure heart to fit and prepare us for the vision of himself, he will obtain his own end; for who can prevent him from doing what he purposes?

God also hath promised it. He hath given his faithful word for it in our text; and to the same purpose is Ps. xxiv. 3, 4. "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? and who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully." And again, Isaiah xxxiii. 15, 16, 17. "He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly: he that despiseth the gain of oppression, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high: his place of defence shall be the munition of rocks: bread shall be given him; his water shall be sure. Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

3. This is the only way to come to this blessedness.

First. It is no way fit or suitable that those who have not pure hearts, should be admitted to this privilege. It would be most unsuitable for those who are all over defiled with the most loathsome filth, to be admitted into the glorious presence of the King of heaven and earth. It would not become the majesty of God, to allow those who are so abominable to come into his blessed presence; nor is it at all becoming his holiness, whereby he is of purer eyes than to behold such pollution.

It becomes persons when they come into the presence of a king, so to attire themselves, that they may not appear in a sordid habit, and it would be much more unsuitable still, for any to come all defiled with filth; but sin is that which renders the soul much more loathsome in the sight of God. This spiritual filth is of a nature most disagreeable to that pure, heavenly light; it would be most unsuitable to have the pollution of sin and wickedness, and the light of glory, mixed together; and it is what God never will suffer. It would be a most unbecoming thing for such to be the objects of God's favour, and to see the love of God, and to receive

the testimonies of that love. It would be most unsuitable for the glorious and most blessed God to embrace in the arms of his love, that that is infinitely more filthy than a reptile.

Secondly. It is naturally impossible that the soul which is impure, should see God. The sight of God's glory, and impurity of heart, are not compatible in the same subject. Where spiritual defilement holds possession of the heart, it is impossible that the divine light which discovers God's glory, should enter. How can he, who is under the power of enmity against God, and who only hates God, see his beauty and loveliness at the same time? Sin, so long as it has the government and possession of the soul, will blind the mind and maintain darkness. As long as sin keeps possession, the heart will be blinded through its deceitfulness.

Thirdly. If it were possible for them to see God, they could not find any blessedness in it. What pleasure would it give to the soul that hates holiness, to see the holiness of God; what pleasure to them who are God's enemies, to see his greatness and glory! Wicked men have no relish for such intellectual, pure, and holy delights and enjoyments. As we have observed already, to have a relish for spiritual enjoyments, is one part of the purity of heart spoken of in the text.

Fourthly. It is impossible that such should be the objects of God's favour and complacence, and therefore they cannot have this part of the blessed-making vision of God, viz. the seeing of his love. It is impossible that God should take pleasure in wickedness, or should have complacence in the wicked, and therefore they cannot have the blessed-making vision of God, for seeing the love of God is an essential part of it. If a man sees how glorious God is, and has not this consideration with it, that he has a property in this glory of God; if he cannot consider this glorious being as his friend; if he takes no pleasure in him, but, on the contrary, loathes and abhors him, the sight of God will be to him no blessedness.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we learn how great a thing it is to be an upright and sincere Christian; for all such are pure in heart, and stand entitled to the blessedness of seeing the most high God. The time is coming when they shall assuredly see him; they shall see him who is infinitely greater than all the kings of the earth; they shall see him face to face, shall see as much of his glory and beauty as the eyes of their souls are capable of beholding. They shall not only see him for a few moments, or an hour, but they shall dwell in his presence, and shall sit down for ever to drink in the rays of his glory. They shall see him invested in all this majesty, with smiles

and love in his countenance; they shall see him, and converse with him, as their nearest and best friend.

Thus shall they see him soon. The intervening moments fly swiftly, the time is even at the door, when they shall be admitted to this blessedness.

2. Let the consideration of this subject put us all upon inquiring, whether we ourselves are pure in heart. Is our religion of that kind which has its seat chiefly in the heart, or doth it chiefly consist in what is outward in morality and formality? Have we ever experienced a change of heart; have we a right spirit renewed within us; have we ever seen the odiousness and filthiness that there is in sin; is it what we hate, wherever we see it; and do we especially hate it in ourselves, and loath ourselves for it; is it the object of our hatred as sin, and as it is against God?

And are there any that now hear me, who think themselves to be Christians, who do yet, either in their imaginations and thoughts, or in any secret practice, allow and indulge the lust of uncleanness, and live in such a way? If it be so, they had great need to bethink themselves whether or no they are not of that generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet are not cleansed from their filthiness. If they imagine that they are pure in heart, and live in such wickedness, their confidence is vain presumption. Inquire whether holy exercises and holy employments are the delight of your soul, and what you take pleasure in above all other things in which you can be engaged. Are the enjoyments that you choose, and take the greatest delight in, spiritual and heavenly enjoyments? Is the seeing of God, and conversing with him, and dwelling in his presence for ever, what you should of your own accord choose above all other things?"

3. I would earnestly exhort those who hear me, to make to themselves a pure heart. Though it be God's work to give it, yet it is as truly your work to obtain it; though it be God's work to purify the heart, yet the actual, or rather the active procuring of it is your act. All pure and holy exercises are man's acts, and they are his duty. Therefore we are commanded to make us a new heart, and a right spirit. Ezek. xviii. 31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die?"

We must not think to excuse ourselves by saying that it is God's work, that we cannot purify our own hearts; for though it be God's work in one sense, yet it is equally our work in another. James iv. 8. "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." If you do not engage in this work yourselves, and purify your own hearts, they never will be pure. If you do not

get a pure heart, the blame of it will be laid to your own backwardness. The unclean soul hates to be purified; it is opposite to its nature; there is a great deal of self-denial in it. But be content to contradict the nature and bent of your own heart, that it may be purified; however grating it may be to you at first, yet consider how blessed the issue will be. Though the road be a little rough in the beginning, yet it will grow pleasanter and pleasanter, till at last it will infallibly lead to that lightsome and glorious country, the inhabitants of which do see and converse with God. Prov. iv. 18. "But the path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." If you would be in the way to have a pure heart,

1. Purify your hands: cleanse yourself from every external impurity of speech and behaviour; take heed that you never defile your hands in known wickedness; break off all your sins by righteousness; and take heed that you do not give way to impure lusts that would entice to sinful actions. If you set about the work of cleansing yourself, but when a temptation comes then plunge yourself into the mire again, you never will be likely to become pure; but you must be steady in your reformation and the amendment of your ways and doings.

2. Take heed you do not rest in external purity, but seek purity of heart in the ways of God's appointment; seek it in a constant and diligent attendance on all God's ordinances.

3. Be often searching your own heart, and seek and pray that you may see the filthiness of it. If ever you are made pure you must be brought to see that you are filthy; you must see the plague and pollution of your own heart.

4. Beg of God that he would give you his holy Spirit. It is the Spirit of God that purifies the soul. Therefore the Spirit of God is often compared to fire, and is said to baptize with fire. He cleanses the heart, as fire cleanses the metals; and burns up the filth and pollution of the mind, and is therefore called the spirit of burning. Isai. iv. 4. "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning."

SERMON X.

THANKSGIVING SERMON, Nov. 7, 1734.

REV. xiv. 2.

And I heard a voice from heaven as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps.

WE may observe in these words, (1.) What it was that John heard, viz. the voice and melody of a company praising God. It is said in the next verse that they sung a new song before the throne. (2.) Whence he heard this voice, "I heard," says he, "a voice from heaven." This company that he heard praising God was in heaven. It is said in the following verse, "They sung this song before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders: but the throne of God, and the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, are all represented in these visions of John, as being in heaven. So that this voice was the voice of the heavenly inhabitants, the voice of the blessed and glorious company that is in heaven, before the throne of God there. (3.) The kind of voice, which is here set forth in a very lively and elegant manner; it is said to be as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, and as the voice of harpers harping with their harps. Hereby several things are represented in a very striking manner. 1. The distance of the voice. 2. That it was the voice of a vast and innumerable multitude: so that it was as the voice of many waters. How naturally does this represent the joint, continual, and loud voice of a vast multitude at a distance, that it resembled the voice of many waters. 3. The loudness of the voice. It was as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder; which describes the extraordinary fervency of their praises, and how lively and vigorous they were therein, and how that every one praised God with all his might. They all, joining together, sung with such fervency, that heaven did as it were ring with their praises. The noise of thunder, and the roaring of many waters, are the most great and majestic sounds ever heard upon earth, and are often spoken of in the scriptures as

the mightiest sounds. John could not distinctly hear what they sang, but they being in heaven, at a great distance, he knew not what better to compare it to, than to the roaring of the sea, or a great thunder. Yet, 4. It was a melodious sound, signified by this expression, I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps. The harp was a stringed instrument, that David made much use of, in praising God. John represents the matter thus to us, That the voice which he heard, being at a great distance, it was indistinct; and being of such a vast multitude, and such a mighty fervent voice, that it seemed in some measure like distant thunder, or the roaring of water, and yet he could perceive the music of the voice at the same time: though it was in some respects as thunder and the noise of water, yet there was a sweet and excellent melody in it. In short, though these comparisons of which John makes use, to signify to us what kind of a voice and sound it was that he heard, are exceedingly lively and elegant; yet this seems to be evident from them, that what he heard was inexpressible, and that he could find nothing that could perfectly represent it. That a voice should be as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder, and yet like the voice of harpers, is to us not easily to be conceived of. But the case was, that John could find no earthly sound that was sufficient to represent it; and therefore such various and different similitudes are aggregated and cast together to represent it. But thus much seems to be signified by it, that it seemed to be the voice of an innumerable multitude, and that they were exceedingly fervent and mighty in their praises: that the voice of this multitude was very great, and exceedingly full of majesty, and yet a most sweet and melodious voice at the same time.

Doctrine. The work of the saints in heaven doth very much consist in praising God.

I. *Proposition.* The saints in heaven are employed; they are not idle; they have there much to do: they have a work before them that will fill up eternity.

We are not to suppose, when the saints have finished their course and done the work appointed them here in this world, and are got to their journey's end, to their Father's house, that they will have nothing to do. It is true, the saints when they get to heaven, rest from their labours and their works follow them. Heaven is not a place of labour and travail, but a place of rest. Heb. iv. 9. There remaineth a rest for the people of God; and it is a place of the reward of labour. But yet the rest of heaven does not consist in idleness, and a cessation of all action, but only a cessation from all the trouble and toil and tediousness of action. The most perfect rest is consistent with

being continually employed. So it is in heaven. Though the saints are exceedingly full of action, yet their activity is perfectly free from all labour, or weariness, or unpleasantness. They shall rest from their work, that is from all work of labour and self-denial and grief, care and watchfulness, but they will not cease from action. The saints in glory are represented as employed in serving God, as well as the saints on earth, though it be without any difficulty or opposition. Rev. xxii. 3. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him." Yea, we are told, that they shall serve God day and night, that is, continually or without ceasing; Rev. vii. 15. "Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple." And yet this shall be without any manner of trouble, as it follows in the next verse. "They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat." In this world saints labour as it were, in the wearisome heat of the sun, but there, though they shall still serve God, yet shall the sun not light on them nor any heat. In one sense, the saints and angels in heaven rest not day nor night, Rev. iv. 8; that is, they never cease from their blessed employment. Perfection of happiness does not consist in idleness, but on the contrary, it very much consists in action. The angels are blessed spirits, and yet they are exceedingly active in serving God. They are as a flame of fire, which is the most active thing that we see in this world. God himself enjoys infinite happiness and perfect bliss, and yet he is not inactive, but is himself in his own nature a perfect act, and is continually at work in bringing to pass his own purposes and ends. That principle of holiness that is in its perfection in the saints in heaven, is a most active principle; so that though they enjoy perfect rest, yet they are a great deal more active than they were when in this world. In this world they were exceedingly dull and heavy, and inactive, but now they are a flame of fire. The saints in heaven are not merely passive in their happiness. They do not merely enjoy God passively, but in an active manner. They are not only acted upon by God, but they mutually act towards him, and in this action and re-action consists the heavenly happiness.

II. *Proposition.* Their employment consists very much in praising God.

John the beloved disciple had often visions of heaven, and in almost every instance had a vision of the inhabitants as praising God. So in the fourth chapter he tells us that he looked, and behold a door was opened in heaven, and he was called up thither, and that he saw the throne of God and him that sat on

the throne, and there he gives us an account how those that were round about the throne were praising God ; the four living creatures rest not day nor night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come. And when those living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him, the four and twenty elders fall down before him and worship him, &c. &c. Again in the fifth chapter, we have an account how they sing praises to Christ, 8, 9, &c. And so in the seventh chapter, 9, 10, 11, 12, vs. And in the eleventh chapter, 16, 17, vs. And in the twelfth chapter, 10th, v. And in the fifteenth chapter, 2, 3, 4, vs. And in the beginning of the nineteenth chapter we have an account how the hosts of heaven sing hallelujahs to God. By all which it most evidently appears, that their work very much consists in praising God and Christ. We have but a very imperfect knowledge of the future state of blessedness, and of their employment: without doubt they have various employments there. We cannot reasonably question but they are employed in contributing to each other's delight. They shall dwell together in society. They shall also probably be employed in contemplating on God, his glorious perfections, and glorious works, and so gaining knowledge in these things. And doubtless they will be employed many ways, that we now know nothing of: but this we may determine, that much of their employment consists in praising God, and that for the following reasons.

1. Because they there see God. This is a blessedness promised to the saints that they shall see God. Matth. v. 8. That they see God, sufficiently shows the reason why they praise him. They that see God cannot but praise him. He is a Being of such glory and excellency, that the sight of this excellency of his will necessarily influence them that behold it to praise him. Such a glorious sight will awaken and rouse all the powers of the soul, and will irresistibly impel them, and draw them into acts of praise. Such a sight enlarges their souls, and fills them with admiration, and with an unspeakable exultation of spirit.

'Tis from the little that the saints have seen of God, and know of him in this world, that they are excited to praise him in the degree they do here. But here they see but as in a glass darkly ; they have only now and then a little glimpse of God's excellency ; but then they shall have the transcendent glory and divine excellency of God set in their immediate and full view. They shall dwell in his immediate glorious presence, and shall see face to face. 1 Cor. xiii. 12. Now the saints see the glory of God but by a reflected light, as we in the night see the light of the sun reflected from the moon, but in heaven they shall directly behold the Sun of Righteousness, and shall look full upon him when shining in all his glory. This being the case, it can be no otherwise, but

that they should very much employ themselves in praising God. When they behold the glorious power of God, they cannot but praise that power: when they see God's wisdom that is so wonderful and infinitely beyond all created wisdom, they cannot but continually praise that wisdom; when they view the infinitely pure and lovely holiness of God, whereby the heavens themselves are not pure in comparison with Him, how can they avoid with an exalted heart to praise that beauty of the divine nature! When they see the infinite grace of God, and see what a boundless ocean of mercy and love he is, how can they but celebrate that grace with the highest praise!

2. They will have another sense of the greatness of the fruits of God's mercy than we have here in this world. They will not only have a sight of the glorious attributes of God's goodness and mercy in their beatific vision of God, but they will be sensible of the exceeding greatness of the fruits of it; the greatness of the benefits that he has bestowed. They will have another sense of the greatness and manifoldness of the communications of his goodness to his creation in general. They will be more sensible how that God is the fountain of all good, the Father of Lights, from whom proceeds every good and perfect gift. We do now but little consider, in comparison with what we should do, how full the world is of God's goodness, and how it appears in the sun, moon, and stars, and in the earth and seas, with all their fulness, and wheresoever we turn our eyes, and how all ranks and orders of being, from the highest angel to the lowest insect, are dependent upon, and maintained by, the goodness of God. These the saints in heaven clearly see; they see how the universe is replenished with his goodness, and how the communications of his goodness are incessantly issuing from God as from an everflowing fountain, and are poured forth all around in vast profusion into every part of heaven and earth, as light is every moment diffused from the sun. We have but faint imperfect notions of these things, but the saints in heaven see them with perfect clearness. They have another sense of the greatness of God's goodness to mankind, and to the Church, and to them in particular, than any of us have. They have another sense of the greatness of God's goodness in the temporal mercies which God bestowed upon them while they were here in this world, though they know that spiritual mercies are infinitely greater. But especially they have an immensely greater sense of the exceeding greatness of the fruits of God's grace and mercy bestowed in redemption. They have another sense how great a gift the gift of God's only begotten Son is. They have another sense of the greatness and dignity of the person of Christ, and how great a thing it was for him to become man, and how great a thing it was for him to lay down his life, and to endure the shame-

ful and accursed death of the cross. They have another sense how great the benefits are that Christ has purchased for men, how great a mercy it is to have sin pardoned, and to be delivered from the misery of hell. They have another sense how dreadful that misery is, for the damned are tormented in the presence of the holy angels and saints, and they see the smoke of their torment; and have another sense what eternity is, and so are proportionably more sensible how great a mercy it is to be delivered from that torment. They have another sense how great a fruit of God's grace it is to be the children of God, and to have a right and title to eternal glory. They are sensible of the greatness of the benefits that Christ has purchased, by their experience; for they are in possession of that blessedness and glory that he has purchased; they taste the sweetness of it: and therefore they are more sensible what cause they have to praise God for these things. The grace and goodness of God in the work of redemption, appears so wonderful to them, that their thoughts of it do excite them to the most ardent praise. When they take a view of the grace of God and of the love of Christ in redemption, they see that there is cause that they should exert the utmost of their capacities, and spend an eternity in praising God and the Lamb. It is but a very little that we at best can conceive of the greatness of the benefits of redemption, and therefore we are but little affected by it, and our praises for it are low and dull things.

3. Another reason is, they will be perfect in humility. In order to a person's being rightly disposed to the work of praise, he must be a humble person. A proud person is for assuming all praise to himself, and is not disposed to ascribe it to God. It is humility only that will enable us to say from the heart, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, but unto thy name be the glory." The humble person admires the goodness and grace of God to him. He sees more how wonderful it is that God should take such notice of him, and show such kindness to him, that is so much below his notice. Now the saints in heaven have this grace of humility perfected in them. They do as much excel the saints on earth in humility as in other graces. Though they are so much above the saints on earth in holiness and in their exalted state, yet they are vastly more humble than the saints on earth be. They are as much lower in humility as they are higher in honour and happiness. And the reason of it is that they know more of God; they see more of his greatness and infinite highness, and therefore are so much the more sensible of their own comparative nothingness. They are the more sensible of the infinite difference there is between God and them; and therefore are more sensible how wonderful it is that God should take so much notice of them, to have such communion with them, and give them such a

full enjoyment of him. They are far more sensible what unworthy creatures they have been, that God should bestow such mercies upon them, than the saints on earth. They have a greater sight of the evil of sin. They see more what filthy vile creatures they were by nature, and how dreadfully they provoked God by actual sin, and how they have deserved God's hatred and wrath. The saints in heaven have as much greater a sense of their unworthiness in their natural state than the saints on earth, as they have a greater sense of God's glorious excellency, for it is the sight of God's excellency which gives them a sight of their own unworthiness. And therefore they do proportionally admire the love of God to them in giving Christ to die for them, and the love of Christ in being willing to offer himself for their sins; and of the wonderful mercy of God in their conversion, and bestowing eternal life upon them. The humble sense the saints have of their own unworthiness doth greatly engage and enlarge their hearts in praise to him for his infinite mercy and grace.

4. Their love to God and Christ will be perfect. Love is a principal ingredient in the grace of thankfulness. There is a counterfeit thankfulness in which there is no love. But there is love in exercise in all sincere thankfulness. And the greater any person's love is, the more will he be disposed to praise. Love will cause him to delight in the work. He that loves God, proportionably seeks the glory of God, and loves to give him glory. Now the hearts of the saints in heaven are all, as it were, a pure flame of love. Love is the grace that never faileth; whether there be prophesies, they shall fail, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away. Faith shall cease in vision, and hope in fruition, but love never faileth. The grace of love will be exalted to its greatest height and highest perfection in heaven; and love will vent itself in praise. Heaven will ring with praise, because it is full of love to God. This is the reason that great assembly, that innumerable host, praise God with such ardency, that their praise is as the voice of many waters, and as the mighty thunderings, because they are animated by so ardent, vigorous, and powerful a principle of divine love.

APPLICATION.

I. This subject may be applied in the way of INSTRUCTION.

1. Hence we may learn the excellency of this work of praising God. That it is a most excellent employment, appears, because it is a heavenly employment. It is that work wherein the saints and angels are continually employed.

If we sincerely and frequently praise God, we shall therein be like the heavenly inhabitants, and join with them.

That it is the work of heaven shows it to be the most honourable work. No employment can be a greater honour to a man, than to praise God. It is the peculiar dignity of the nature of man, and the very thing wherein his nature is exalted above things without reason, and things without life; that he is made capable of actively glorifying his Creator. Other creatures do glorify God; the sun, moon, and stars, and the earth and waters, and all the trees of the field, and grass and herbs, and fishes and insects, do glorify God. Psa. xix. 1—6. Job xii. 7, 8. But herein is the peculiar dignity of the nature of man, that he is capable of glorifying him as a cause, by counsel, understandingly and voluntarily, which is a heavenly work.

2. This doctrine may give us an idea of the glorious and happy state of the saints in heaven. It shows how joyfully and gloriously they spend their time. Joy is a great ingredient in praise. There is an exultation of spirit in fervent praise. Praise is the most joyful work in the world. And how joyful a society are they that join together, so many thousands and millions of them, with one heart and one soul, to sing a new song before the throne, that fill heaven with their glorious melody! How joyful they are in their work, appears in the text, by their fervency in it, so that their voices resounded as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder. What ineffable joy was there in those harpers whom John heard harping with their harps!

This shows how different a state the saints are in in heaven, from what they are in this world. Here much of the work to which the saints are called, consists in labouring, in fighting, in toilsome travelling in a waste howling wilderness, in mourning and suffering, and in offering up strong crying and tears. But there in heaven, their work continually is to lift up their joyful songs of praise.

This world is a valley of tears, a world filled with sighs and groans. One is groaning under some bodily pain, another is mourning and lamenting over a dear departed friend; another is crying out by reason of the arm of the oppressor. But in heaven there is no mixture of such sounds as these; there is nothing to be heard amongst them but the sweet and glorious melody of God's praises. There is an holy cheerfulness to be seen throughout that blessed society. Rev. xxi. 4. "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying." They shall never have any thing more to do with sighing and crying; but their eternal work henceforward shall be praise.

This should make us long for heaven, where they spend their time so joyfully and gloriously. The saints especially have reason to be earnestly breathing after that happy state, where they may in so joyful a manner praise God.

3. This may put natural persons upon reflecting on their own state, that they have no part nor lot in this matter. You are an alien from the commonwealth of Israel. You are not one of the people of God. You do not belong to their society, that are to spend their eternity after that joyful manner, which you have now heard. You have no right nor portion in heaven. If you hereafter come and offer yourself to be admitted into this blessed society, in your present state; if you come and try to be admitted you will be thrust out; you will be driven away. If you come and knock, and cry to be admitted to the wedding, saying, *Lord, Lord open unto us*, all will be to no purpose! You will hear no other word except *Depart!* You shall be shut out into outer darkness. You shall not be permitted to sing among the children, but shall be driven out, to howl among dogs. Rev. xxii. 14, 15. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city; for without are dogs," &c. You are in danger of spending eternity, not in joyfully singing praises, but in a quite contrary manner; in weeping, in wailing, and gnashing of teeth; and blaspheming God, because of your pains, and because of your plagues. You shall see others coming from the east, and the west, and sitting down, with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, in the kingdom of God: taking their places among that blessed, happy society, and joining their voices in their heavenly music. But you see your lot; you shall have other work to do. Isa. lxv. 14. "Behold my servants shall sing for joy of heart; but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit."

II. In the way of EXHORTATION.—If it be so that praising God is very much the employment of heaven, hence let all be exhorted to the work and duty of praising God. The following considerations will show why we should be stirred up by this doctrine to this work.

1. Let it be considered that the church on earth is the same society with those saints who are praising God in heaven. There is not one church of Christ in heaven, and another here upon earth. Though the one be sometimes called the church triumphant, and the other the church militant, yet they are not indeed two churches. By the church triumphant, is meant the triumphant part of the church; and by the church militant, the militant part of it: for there is but one universal or Catholic church. Cant. vi. 9. "My dove, my undefiled, is but one."

Christ has not two mystical bodies. 1 Cor. xii. 12. "The body is one, and hath many members." The glorious assembly and the saints on earth make but one family. Eph. iii. 15. "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." Though some are in heaven, and some on earth, in very different circumstances, yet they are all united: for there is but *one body, and one spirit, and one Lord Jesus Christ. One God and Father of all, who is above all and through all, and in all.* God hath in Christ united the inhabitants of heaven, and the holy inhabitants of this earth, and hath made them one. Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fulness of time, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." Heaven is at a great distance from the earth: it is called a *far country*. Matth. xxv. 14. Yet the distance of place does not separate them so as to make two societies. For though the saints on earth, at present, are at a distace from heaven, yet they belong there; that is their proper home. The saints that are in this world are strangers here; and therefore the Apostle reproved the Christians in his day, for acting as though they belonged to this world. Col. ii. 20. "Why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?"

Some of a people may be in their own land, and some in a strange land; and yet be but one people. Some of a family may be at home, and some sojourning abroad; and yet be but one family. The saints on earth, though they be not actually in heaven, yet have their inheritance in heaven, and are travelling towards heaven, and will arrive there in a little time. They are nearly related to the saints in heaven; they are their brethren, being children of the same Father, and fellow heirs with Jesus Christ. In Ephes. ii. 19, the saints on earth are said to be *fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.* And the Apostle tells the Christian Hebrews, Heb. xii. 22—24, that they were "come to Mount Zion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." But how were they *come* to this heavenly city, and this glorious assembly, when they were yet here on earth? They were come to them, ere they were brought and united to them in the same family. But this is what I would inculcate by all this, that the church of God on earth ought to be employed in the same work with the saints in heaven, because they are the same society: as they are but one family, have but one Father, one inheritance; so they should have but one work. The church on earth ought

to join with the saints in heaven in their employment, as God hath joined them in one society by his grace.

We profess to be of the visible people of Christ, to be Christians and not heathens, and so to belong to the universal church. We profess therefore to be of the same society, and shall not walk answerably to our profession, unless we employ ourselves in the same work.

2. Let it be considered, that we all of us hope to spend an eternity with the saints in heaven, and in the same work of praising God. There is, it may be, not one of us but who hopes to be a saint in heaven, and there continually to sing praises to God and the Lamb; but how disagreeable will it be, with such a hope, to live in the neglect of praising God now! We ought now to begin that work which we intend shall be the work of another world; for this life is given us on purpose that therein we might prepare for a future life. The present state is a state of probation and preparation: a state of preparation for the enjoyments and employment of another, future, and eternal state; and no one is ever admitted to those enjoyments and employments, but those who are prepared for them here. If ever we would go to heaven, we must be fitted for heaven in this world; we must here have our souls moulded and fashioned for that work and that happiness. They must be formed for praise, and they must begin their work here. The beginnings of future things are in this world. The seed must be sown here; the foundation must be laid in this world. Here is laid the foundation of future misery, and of future happiness. If it be not begun here, it never will be begun. If our hearts be not in some measure tuned to praise in this world, we shall never do any thing at the work hereafter. The light must dawn in this world, or the sun will never rise in the next. As we therefore all of us would be, and hope to be, of that blessed company which praise God in heaven, we should now inure ourselves to the work.

3. Those works of God's mercy for which the saints in heaven will chiefly praise him, have been wrought amongst us in this world.

The mercy and grace of God for which the saints in heaven will chiefly praise him, is his mercy exercised in the work of redemption, which work has been wrought out in this world. This love of God is the chief object of their admiration, and what they chiefly contemplate, and that employs their most ardent praises.

The grace of Christ, about which their praises will be principally employed, is that he should so love sinful man as to undertake for him, to take upon him man's nature, and lay down

his life for him. We find that is the subject of their praises, in Rev. v. 8, 9. "And when he had taken the book, the four living creatures, and the four and twenty elders, fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints; and they sang a new song, "Thou art worthy, for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

They will chiefly praise God for these fruits of his mercy, because these are the greatest fruits of it that ever have been; far greater than the glorifying of saints. The saints in heaven will praise God for bestowing glory upon them; but the actual bestowment of glory upon them, after it has been purchased by the blood of Christ, is in no measure so great a thing as the purchasing of it by his blood. For Christ, the eternal Son of God, to become man, and to lay down his life, was a far greater thing than the glorifying of all the saints that ever have been, or ever will be glorified, from the beginning of the world to the end of it. The giving Christ to die, comprehends all other mercies: for all other mercies are through this. The giving of Christ is a greater thing than the giving of all things else for the sake of Christ. This evidently appears, from Rom. viii. 32. "He who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" So that the work of redemption is that for which the saints in heaven do chiefly praise God. But this work has been wrought here, among us in this world. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." The Incarnation of Christ was a thing that was brought to pass in this world, and the sufferings and death of Christ were also accomplished on earth. Shall heaven be filled with praises for what was done on earth, and shall there be no praises on earth where it was done?

4. If you praise God sincerely in this world, it will be a sign that you are really to be one of those that shall praise him in heaven. If any man be found sincerely glorifying God, he will in due time be brought to them, as one who is fit to be of their company. Heaven is the appointed place of all sincere praisers of God; they are all to be gathered together there. And no man can sincerely praise God, unless he be one of those who are redeemed from among men, one that God has separated from the rest of the world, and set apart for himself.

5. If we begin now to exercise ourselves in the work of heaven, it will be the way to have foretastes of the enjoyments of heaven. The business and the happiness go together. This will be the way to have your heart filled with spiritual joy and comfort. If you heartily praise God, you shall rejoice in him, and he will show you more of himself, of his glory and love, that you may still have greater cause of praise.

I proceed to give some DIRECTIONS for the performance of this work.

1. Be directed, in order to your acceptably performing this duty, to repent of your sins, and turn to God. If you have not a work of conversion wrought in you, you will do nothing to any purpose, in this work of praise. An unconverted person never once sincerely or acceptably praises God. If you would do the work of the saints in heaven, you must be, not only in profession, but really, one of their society; for there are none else can do their work. As in the verse following the text: "And they sung as it were a new song, before the throne, and before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no man could learn that song, but the hundred and forty-four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth." A hundred and forty-four thousand is a mystical number for the church of God, or the assembly of the saints, or those that are redeemed from the earth. There is no man can learn the song that they sing in heaven, but those of that number. It is beyond the reach of all natural men, let them be persons of ever so great abilities and sagacity. They never can learn that heavenly song, if they be not of that number. For it is only the sanctifying, saving instruction of the Spirit of God, that can teach us that song.

2. Labour after more and more of those principles from whence the praise of the saints in heaven doth arise. You have already heard that the saints in heaven do praise the Lord so fervently, because they *see* him; labour therefore that you, though you have not an immediate vision of God, as they have, may yet have a clear spiritual sight of him, and that you may know more of God, and have frequent discoveries of him made to you.

You have heard that the saints in heaven make praise so much their work, because of the great sense they have of the greatness and wonderfulness of the fruits of the Lord's goodness. Labour therefore to get your minds more deeply impressed with such a sense.

The saints in glory are so much employed in praise, because they are perfect in *humility*, and have so great a sense of the infinite distance between God and them. They have a great sense of their own unworthiness, that they are by nature unworthy of any of the mercy of God. Labour therefore that you may obtain more of a sense of your own littleness, and vileness; that you may see more what you are, how ill you have deserved at the hands of God, and how you are less than the least of all his mercies.

The hearts of the saints in heaven are all inflamed with divine *love*, which continually influences them to praise God. Seek that this principle may abound in you, and then you likewise will delight in praising God. It will be a most sweet and pleasant employment to you.

3. Labour, in your praises, to praise God, so far as may be, in the same manner that the saints do in heaven. They praise him *fervently*, with their whole heart, and with all their strength, as was represented in vision to John by the exceeding loudness of their praise. Labour therefore that you may not be cold and dull in your praises, but that you also may praise God fervently.

The saints in heaven praise God *humbly*. Let it also be your delight to abase yourselves, to exalt God, and set him upon the throne, and to lie at his footstool.

The saints in heaven praise God *unitedly*. They praise him with one heart and one soul, in a most firm union. Endeavour that you may thus praise God in union with his people; having your hearts knit to them in fervent love and charity; which will be a great help to your praising and glorifying God unitedly with them.

III. In the way of REPROOF to those who neglect the *singing* of God's praises. Certainly, such a neglect is not consonant to the hope and expectation of spending an eternity in that work. It is an appointment of God, that we should not only praise in our prayers, but that we should *sing* his praises. It was a part of divine worship, not only under the old testament, but the new. Thus we read that Christ and his disciples sung praises together. Matth. xxvi. 30. So it is commanded, Ephes. v. 19. "Be ye filled with the Spirit, speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord." And Col. iii. 16. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." 1 Cor. xiv. 15. "I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." So also the saints in heaven are represented as singing God's praises. And is that their happy and glorious employment; and yet shall it be so neglected by us, who hope for heaven? If there be any of the godly that do neglect this duty, I would desire them to consider how discordant such a neglect is with their profession, with their state, and with the mercies which God has bestowed. How much cause has God given you to sing his praise! You have received more to prompt you to praise God than all the natural men in the world; and can you content yourself to live in the world without singing the praises of your heavenly Father, and your glorious Redeemer?

Parents ought to be careful that their children are instructed in singing, that they may be capable of performing that part of divine worship. This we should do, as we would have our children trained up for heaven; for we all of us would have our children go to heaven.

IV. In the way of CONSOLATION to the godly! It may be matter of great comfort to you, that you are to spend your eternity with the saints in heaven, where it is so much their work to praise God. The saints are sensible what cause they have to praise God, and oftentimes are ready to say, they long to praise him more, and that they never can praise him enough. This may be a consolation to you, that you shall have a whole eternity in which to praise him. They earnestly desire to praise God better. This, therefore, may be your consolation, that in heaven your heart shall be enlarged, you shall be enabled to praise him in an immensely more perfect and exalted manner than you can do in this world. You shall not be troubled with such a dead, dull heart, with so much coldness, so many clogs and burdens from corruption, and from an earthly mind; with a wandering, unsteady heart; with so much darkness and so much hypocrisy. You shall be one of that vast assembly that praise God so fervently, that their voice is "as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings."

You long to have others praise God, to have every one praise him. There, there will be enough to help you, and join you in praising him, and those that are capable of doing it ten thousand times better than saints on earth. Thousands and thousands of angels and glorified saints will be around you, all united to you in the dearest love, all disposed to praise God, not only for themselves, but for his mercy to you.

SERMON XI.

MATTHEW xi. 16, 17, 18, 19.

But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold, a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners: but Wisdom is justified of her children.

THE occasion of this discourse was John's sending to Christ two of his disciples, saying, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" When the messengers had gone back, Christ enters into a discourse with the multitude concerning John, of which the verses read are a part, in which Christ reproves the unreasonableness of the Jews in rejecting God's messengers. We may observe in the words the following things:

1. The messengers of God that are here instanced in that they had been rejected, viz. John the Baptist and Christ. The former is spoken of in the context as being on some accounts the greatest of all the prophets that ever came before Christ, as you may see verses 9, 10, 11. "But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet. For this is he of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women, there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." The latter, even Christ, was the great prophet of God, the head and Lord of the prophets, God's only begotten Son.

2. In what the unreasonableness of their rejecting these messengers of God, appears, viz. in their inconsistency with themselves in those objections which they made against them. And here we may observe,

1st. The nature of their objections against these two messengers of God; they objected against their manner of living with respect to their meat and drink.

2d. The different manner of living of those two messengers of God. Christ came eating and drinking, but John came neither eating nor drinking, i. e. John lived on a very coarse and spare diet, as we read, Matth. iii. 4. "And the same John had his raiment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey. He carefully abstained from that free use of pleasant meats and drinks that others allowed themselves in. But Christ came eating and drinking, i. e. freely using the comforts and enjoyments of life, taking indifferently all kinds of food or drink that were wholesome, comfortable, and lawful. This diverse manner of living of John the Baptist and Christ, was agreeable to the diverse errands that they came upon. John's errand was to call men to repentance, to awaken them to a sense of their sin and misery, to bring them to mourn for their sins, and humble themselves before God for them, that they might be prepared for the comforts and blessings of the kingdom of heaven that were to be introduced by Jesus Christ. A life of abstinence from the pleasant things of this world was agreeable to the purpose of awakening the soul, and of leading it to mourning and humiliation for sin, which it was especially John's business to preach and set an example of.

But after John had thus prepared the way with awakenings and repentance, then Christ came to administer comfort to those that were thus prepared for it, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, to comfort those that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. Isai. lxi. 1, 2, 3. And freely eating, and drinking, and enjoying the comforts and pleasant things of life, was agreeable to such an errand as this, and therefore Christ, in his first beginning of his public ministry which succeeded John's, declares this to be the business he was come upon. Luke iv. 16, 17, 18, 19. "And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias: and when he had opened the book he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to

preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised; to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

3d. Their unreasonableness appears in the fact, that though the way of living of these two persons was in this respect so diverse, yet they objected against both. John came neither eating nor drinking; and for that they objected against him, and reviled him, as though he was one that was very odd and strange, and beside himself, and under the influence of a diabolical spirit. This objection seemed to manifest a dislike of such a way of living, as though it was their opinion that a man ought not to live thus abstemiously, but should eat and drink freely as other people did. But yet when Christ came and did that, then they objected against that too, and bitterly reproached him for that, and called him a glutton, and wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and of sinners. So that there was no escaping their reproaches. If a man of God lived a life of trial and abstinence, they spoke of it as matter of great reproach, and yet if he did not so, they made that a matter of no less reproach. It was a crime with them for a prophet to eat and drink, and it was also a crime to let it alone. So inconsistent were they with themselves, that there was no such thing as a prophet's suiting them; they condemned the doing of that which at the same time they condemned the not doing of, and both they condemned with great bitterness, and virulent and contemptuous reproaches. This plainly showed that their objections against John the Baptist and Christ, were but vain pretences, and that the true reason why they disliked them, was, not the manner of living of either of them with respect to eating and drinking, but because they hated their persons and the business they came upon. When men have a prejudice against other persons they will be ready to find fault with every thing in them, they will find out bad names for their virtues, and will reproach those things in them which they will approve of and commend in others to whose persons they have a liking.

3. The thing to which Christ compares their inconsistency with themselves, to wit, to children who meet their companions in the streets or market places, and endeavour to aid them in their play, in things of a diverse and contrary nature; for if they pipe unto them with notes manifesting cheerfulness and mirth, that does not suit them; they refuse to fall in with this, as though they did not like such cheerfulness, and as though mourning would suit them better; and then, when they see that they took a contrary course, they mourned with them, but yet neither do they fall in with that, they do not lament with them; so that they comfort them with nothing, neither mirth nor mourning.

So John the baptist preaching repentance came with tokens of sorrow and mourning, and mean apparel, with a garment of camel's hair, and with a leathern girdle about his loins, and with great abstinence. But Christ when he comes, comes eating and drinking with tokens of comfort and joy; but neither of them suited them. From the text thus explained we shall derive the following

Doctrine. Wicked men are very inconsistent with themselves. They are so in the following respects :

I. The dictates of their darkened understandings are inconsistent with themselves.

II. Their wills are inconsistent with their reason.

III. Their wills are inconsistent with themselves.

IV. Their outward show is inconsistent with their hearts.

V. Their profession is inconsistent with their practice.

VI. Their practice is inconsistent with their hopes.

VII. Their practice is inconsistent with itself.

I. Their understandings are inconsistent with themselves. I do not mean, that the faculty of reason and understanding is inconsistent with itself; for the faculty of understanding with which God has endowed man is wholly good and right. It is that wherein the natural image of God consists, and is the excellency of man's nature; and if the faculty of reason be duly improved, it will lead men right. Light is never inconsistent with itself. But the understandings of natural men are perverted and blinded by sin, and are inconsistent with themselves in two ways :

1. Their practical judgment is inconsistent with their own reason. By their practical judgment, I mean that judgment which they make of things that prevail, so as to determine their actions and govern their practice. This in wicked men is in innumerable things contrary to their own reason ; for, in forming their judgment of things by which they govern themselves, they do not inquire at the mouth of reason, but at the mouth of their inclinations. Their lusts have a far greater hand in the judgments that they make of things, and by which they govern themselves, than their reason. As for instance; their practical judgment is that the things of this fading world, the enjoyments of this short life, are things of greater importance than the things of the eternal world; and yet if they inquire at the mouth of their own reason, that tells them the contrary. Their reason tells them that it is most plain and evident that eternal things, things that are to last for ever, are of vastly greater importance than the things of time.

So their reason tells them that it must needs be the part of wisdom and prudence to improve the present time with the utmost diligence and earnestness, and to make ready for death; and yet they are not convinced of it, but their governing opinion is that

it is best to neglect the business of religion for the present, and to enjoy their ease, and sloth, and lusts awhile longer.

Their reason tells them, that it is well worth the while for every man to deny himself outward pleasure for the good of his soul. But their governing opinion or judgment is contrary, viz. that it is not best; and that pleasures, and the gratification of their lusts are worth more than any benefit they would obtain by seeking their salvation.

The reason of young people tells them that it is their true wisdom to improve the time of youth. Reason tells them that life is very uncertain. But when such persons hear ministers preach concerning the infinite importance of eternal things; the uncertainty of life, the peace and comfort that will be found in a state of happier existence with God, are told how light a thing the difficulty and sufferings of a holy life are in comparison; their reason assents to all this, but their practical judgments are the contrary. When a person has lately died, either in extreme terror and amazement, under a sense of the guilt of a mis-spent life, or full of joy and comfort, in consequence of a life of holy walking with God; their reason tells them that it would be well worth their while to labour and deny themselves all their life time, to be ready for death, and to have a solid foundation of peace and comfort laid up against such an hour. But yet their practice is directly the reverse.

2. Some of their judgments of things are inconsistent with others. For instance, in temporal things, they judge that the good which is of long continuance is to be preferred before that which is of short continuance, and that a long continued calamity is more to be dreaded and avoided than a short one. Their governing judgment is thus in these things, but yet it is the reverse in spiritual things.

Again. Such arguments as they judge to furnish good and clear evidence with them in those things that are agreeable to their sinful inclination, they think not to have any evidence in those things that are contrary to them. In temporal things they think it to be their wisdom to improve times of special advantage, and to watch against that which might ensnare them, or endanger their welfare, but in other things they think the reverse. In these things, and many more that might be mentioned, their judgments are inconsistent with themselves.

II. Their wills are inconsistent with their reason. This inconsistence is a consequence of the foregoing; for if their practical judgment be contrary to their own reason, it will follow that their wills are contrary to their reason; for the will ever follows the dictate of the practical judgment.

Their wills are contrary to their reason in two respects.

1. They will those things which their reason tells them are inconsistent with their duty; and so they are inconsistent with themselves, as their wills are inconsistent with their consciences. Conscience is a principle implanted in the heart of every man, and is as essential to his nature as the faculty of reason, for it is a natural and necessary attendant of that faculty. But the wills of wicked men are contrary to it, and inconsistent with it. They choose those things which they know to be evil, and ought not to be chosen; they choose that which their own reason tells them is unreasonable and vile, and unbecoming men, and justly provoking to their Maker, and contrary to the end for which they are made.

Hence arises an inward war in their own minds: their wills and their consciences warring one against another. There is no true peace in their hearts, for they are at war with themselves, and therefore they are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, unless by a course of horrible violations of the dictates of their own conscience, they have proceeded so far in their war against their own consciences as to stupify conscience, and lay it as it were dead, which is the case of some persons.

2. They will those things which their reason tells them are contrary to their own interest, yea, those things which their own reason tells them are the way to their ruin and misery. At the very same time that wicked men are tempted to commit some sin, and their reason then tells them that it will expose them to the eternal wrath of God, and that it will therefore be a dreadful folly for them to do it, yet they will do it. Or when their reason tells them that the course in which they are going leads to destruction, and represents to them that it is the greatest folly, yet they will go on in it, and run the venture of being everlastingly undone.

So inconsistent, are they with themselves, that they do and allow that of which they hope to repent, they choose that now for choosing which at the same time they expect and hope hereafter to charge themselves with great folly, and to be convinced that it is folly, and to lament and bewail it; nay, they would not do it, if they did not expect hereafter to see that it is very foolish in them so to do, and heartily to mourn for it.

In this respect they are so inconsistent with themselves that they are their own worst enemies. They are inconsistent with themselves, as two mortal enemies cannot consist together, or walk together. By choosing those things which their own reason tells them is contrary to their own interest, and tends to their own undoing, they may be said to hate their own souls, and to love their own ruin. Prov. viii. 36. "He that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death."

III. Their wills and dispositions are inconsistent with their wills. The Jews would neither have a prophet to come eating,

and drinking, nor would they have him otherwise. They knew not what they would have themselves, there was no pleasing them. To eat and drink did not please them; that they reproached as drunkenness, and gluttony: nor did it please them any more not to eat nor drink; this they reproached no less virulently, as though it were an argument that a man was out of his wits, and possessed by the devil. The inconsistency of wicked men's wills with themselves appears in the following things:

1st. They do, in some respects, choose and refuse the same things.

I shall mention some instances.

First. In some respects, many of them wish to be converted from sin to God. They think that they should be ready to give almost all that they have in the world to be converted, and they pray to God to convert them, and seek for conversion, and take advice to that end, and use a great deal of labour for it. But yet if it be considered what conversion is, or what is meant by conversion, viz. the being turned from all their sins to God; they have no desire to be converted, they will not have conversion when it is offered them, when it comes to them they are not willing to be saved from sin, for they are not willing to part with their sins. When they think of the thing in the general, they wish that they were turned from sin; but when it comes to particulars they cannot comply with it, they love their sins too well. When a particular lust comes, and pleads to be indulged and gratified, then in this instance they have no wish to be converted, they are not willing to be turned from their sin altogether, they cannot bear entirely and for ever to renounce and reject it. They have a wish to be converted, but not from enjoying their right hands, and right eyes. They pray that they may be thoroughly and savingly converted, and seem to wish and pray for it; but yet when it comes to them, they are not willing for any more than a partial conversion. They cannot comply with a thorough conversion, for a thorough conversion is a turning from every one of their sins; and that proves that they would be willing to be converted from their sins for a little while, but to part with them finally is what they cannot find it in their hearts to comply with.

Secondly. Some wicked men do in certain respects desire that a work of humiliation may be wrought in them, and yet are utterly opposed to humiliation. They do many things that they may be humbled, and pray that they may be brought off from their own righteousness, and yet would by no means let it go, but are indeed building up their own righteousness all the time.

They seem in some respects to wish that they might submit to the justice and sovereignty of God in their condemnation, but yet are utterly averse to any such thing as owning God's justice.

They are averse to this submission, as appears from their showing such a spirit of strife with God. They do not believe that God is just and sovereign, and how therefore is it possible that they should desire really to submit to God's justice and sovereignty? They cannot heartily and fervently desire to submit to God as just and sovereign, when they do not believe that he possesses those attributes, but think him unjust and tyrannical.

Thirdly. They in some respects wish that they might come to Christ, but indeed are utterly averse to come to him, so that their will is in this also inconsistent with itself. They pray that they may come to Christ, they are ready to say that they would give all the world for an interest in Christ; and yet they will not have an interest in him, for that is what is offered them, and what Christ is continually inviting and urging them to accept, but they refuse it. It is true they like some things in Christ, they like salvation from the pains of hell, they like that safety from everlasting misery which they hear is to be had in him; but there are other things in him which they do not like, his holiness, his salvation from sin, his kingly office, and therefore they will not accept him as he is. If they could have a part of Christ without the rest they would, but they will not accept of the whole of Christ. Indeed they are not willing to come to Christ and cordially accept of him as a Saviour from hell, for they do not see that he is sufficient to save; and besides they are not convinced that they have deserved it. There is no such thing as being cordially willing to accept of a Saviour, who offered to deliver us from an unjust and undeserved punishment; for the hearty accepting of him as a Saviour from the punishment would be allowing the punishment to be just; and God's offering a Saviour from undeserved punishment, is an imposition upon them; a man therefore can never heartily and sincerely accept such an offer. At the same time that natural men seem to wish and pray, and strive to come to Christ, they are in their hearts bitter enemies to him; and there is no such thing as a sincere willingness to accept of one towards whom at the same time we are bitter enemies.

Fourthly. Natural men in some respects are desirous to go to heaven, and yet are averse to heaven. They are full of designs as to what they will do hereafter that they may go to heaven, but yet have no inclination to that wherein heaven really consists. The employments of heaven, which consist altogether in holy acts and holy contemplation, in holy exercises, and holy praises, are that for which they have no desires nor inclination. And for the happiness of heaven, they have no relish, but on the contrary, a dislike and an aversion; for the happiness of heaven consists in holy communion with God and Christ, to which their natures are opposite. Nor have they any desire for the company of heaven, and

when it is observed what heaven really is, they choose this world before heaven.

Fifthly. They wish to have salvation from misery, but yet are averse to those things wherein salvation consists; and at the same time that they pray to Christ to serve them, they undo themselves as fast as they can, they spend their time daily in working out their own ruin They pray that they may be delivered from hell, and yet are all the while piling up fuel, and kindling and blowing the fire. Thus their wills are inconsistent with themselves, as they do in some respects choose and refuse the same things.

2. They dislike and refuse spiritual things as they are, and yet refuse to have them otherwise. This was the very case with the Jews in the text, they would not have a prophet come eating and drinking, if he did so, they looked on him very reproachfully; nor yet would they have him not come eating and drinking, for if he did so they called him a mad man, and possessed with a devil, which is a lively specimen of the inconsistency of wicked men, of which we are speaking.

I will mention several instances of this inconsistency on the part of wicked men.

First. They do not like God as he is, and yet they would not like him if he were otherwise. They would not like him if he were otherwise than he is in those very things for which they most dislike him.

1st. They dislike God because he is an holy God. This is the main foundation of the enmity that wicked men have against God. His perfect purity and holiness make them enemies to him, because from this perfection of his nature he necessarily hates sin, and so hates their sins, which they love, and he will not and cannot allow of any sin in them. They are utter enemies to such a holy God. And yet they would not like him if they supposed him to be an unholy being, or if they supposed him to be at all wanting in perfect holiness, for then he could not be depended upon. If he were unholy, they know that if he promised them any thing they could have no certain dependence upon it, for an unholy being is liable to break his promises; if he were unholy they could have no dependence on his faithfulness, and therefore they would never be willing to give up themselves to him as their God, for they would not know how he would dispose of them, what he would do with them. If he were to obligate himself by covenant, yet they could have no dependence upon it; and therefore they would by no means accept of such a God to be their God, to rule over them, and dispose of them.

2d. They do not like God, because he is a God of justice. This indeed is a branch of his holiness for being strictly and perfectly just, he is disposed to execute just punishment on all iniquity. There-

fore they are exceeding enemies to him, for they are the persons who are obnoxious, being those that have committed iniquity, and exposed themselves to just punishment; and yet they would not like God if he were an unjust God. If he were an unjust being, that would be an insuperable objection with them against accepting him as their God, for then they would think with themselves, "how do I know, how unjustly he may deal with me;" and wicked men, however unjust they are, never like injustice against themselves. And they never would be persuaded to accept of such a God as their Lord and King, for they should then expect to be wronged and abused by him. They would dread committing themselves into the hands of a God that is infinite in power, and can do what he will with them, and has no principle of holiness or justice to keep him from using that power in the most unjust and abusive manner towards them.

Though they are enemies to God because of his justice, yet whenever at any time they think God deals unjustly, they quarrel with him for it. How frequent is it for natural men, when there are any of God's methods of providence, the justice of which they cannot see through, to have their hearts swell with enmity, and to be full of blasphemous malignant thoughts against God, if they do not even manifest it outwardly by a fretful, discontented behaviour, and murmuring speeches?

3d. They do not like God, because he is an Almighty God, and is able to destroy them when he pleases; nor yet would they like him if he were a weak being and of but little power. They would on this account refuse to close with him as their God, for they would have a God able to do great things for them; they wish to have many things done for them, and they would have a God that can do them.

4th. They do not like God because he is an omniscient God, for hereby he sees all their wickedness. But yet neither would they like him if he did not know all things, for then in many cases he would not know what their case is, and what it requires, and what is best for them. He might ruin them in the disposal of them through mistake, he might not know how to extricate them out of difficulties in which they are or may be involved.

5th. Natural men oftentimes dislike God in the exercises of his infinite sovereign mercy, when it is exercised towards others. They are greatly displeased at God's being so gracious to others; they dislike it much that God bestows converting grace upon them and pardoning mercy, and a title to eternal life upon them. When they hear of their conversion it is unpleasant news, and they find fault with it the more when the persons who seem to have received such mercy are very unworthy, and have been very great sinners; they think of the sins of which they have been guilty, and reckon

up all the instances of wickedness they can think of, so that the mercy exercised towards them is the more displeasing because it appears so great in being bestowed on one so unworthy, like the elder brother, Luke xv. 30. "But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf." And yet they would not like God if he were not infinitely merciful, for then they would have less hopes of obtaining mercy themselves. They are angry because God appears so merciful in the exercises of his grace to others; but yet they would have God merciful, and are at the same time afraid that he is not merciful enough to be willing to pardon their sins, and bestow his blessing on them. Thus natural men do not like God as he is, nor yet would they like him if he were otherwise.

Secondly. They do not like men that are holy, nor yet do they like men that are wicked. They do not like holy men, for they know that such do not approve of that which themselves love, and the lives of the godly are a condemnation of the wickedness of their own hearts and lives. Hence there is an enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Gen. iii. 15. "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heel." But although they do not like men if they are godly, so neither do they like them if they are ungodly; they are more forward than the godly are to reprove others for their vice and wickedness, and bitterly to reflect on others for their pride, their covetousness and their idleness. None are more apt to find fault with wickedness in others than those who are wicked themselves, and one great reason is that other men's lusts clash with theirs. Thus one man's pride crosses the pride of another, for it is the nature of pride to desire to be alone in advancement, to make the person in whom it is, affect to be a God, to appropriate all power and all honour to himself as his own prerogative. But such an aim in one man clashes with such an aim in another. Hence there are none that can bear pride in others so ill, as those that are very proud themselves, and there never are such strife and enmity as between proud, haughty men. Proud men love to have others walk humbly before them, and nothing enrages them so much as to have others carry themselves proudly. For the same reason covetous men dislike covetous men, for this lust clashes with the same lust in another. Every covetous man strives to get all into his own hands, to get and keep all that he can to himself from his neighbour. So the lusts of envy, and malice, and revenge, are hated in others by envious and malicious men; because none are so obnoxious to malice, and envy, and revenge, as those that have the most of these qualities. Hence the wicked world on earth, who are at enmity with the church of God for its holiness,

do not at all agree together. Though they agree in being alike under the power of wickedness, yet how full is the world of wicked men of strife and contention, of perpetual jars, animosities, and confusion! Rom. i. 29, 30, 31, 32. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who, knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." So Titus iii. 3. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts, and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another." And hence also it comes to pass that devils and wicked men in hell, though they hate angels and saints in heaven for their holiness, have yet no love one to another; though they all agree in being perfectly wicked, yet they hate one another with implacable hatred, and are continually mortifying and tormenting one another; so that hell is a world of perfect malice and contention.

Thirdly. They refuse to accept of heaven as it is; yet they would not like it if it were otherwise. As has been observed before, they have no relish for the holy enjoyments and employments of heaven. They dislike heaven for its holiness, and yet they would not like it if it were unholy; for then they would be liable to the same troubles and vexations in heaven that they meet with in this world. If it were not that heaven differs from this world in holiness, it would be as full of pride and malice, envy, revenge, contention, injustice, violence and cruelty, as this world is, and so would be as vexatious a world as this is. Wicked men are as liable to the trouble and vexation of the world, which arise from those things, as godly men, and in some respects more so, for they have no divine supports against those things, no safer portion to which their hearts betake themselves.

3. The things that wicked men choose, imply an inconsistency in their own nature. The things which they would have are impossibilities and self-contradictions.

First. They would a sufficient Saviour, and not a holy one. They would not have a holy Saviour, because such a Saviour does not at all agree with their lusts; but yet they would have a sufficient Saviour, one that is sufficient to save them from hell, and so one that is sufficient to make a proper atonement for all their sins, to make full satisfaction to the justice of God, that they may escape the penalty of that justice. But these things prove a great inconsistency, for how is it possible that a Saviour, who is not

perfectly holy himself, should make satisfaction for the unholiness of others? How is it possible that one who deserves to suffer the eternal wrath of God himself for his own sin, should by his sufferings appease God's wrath for the sins of others?

They would have a worthy Saviour, as appears in this; when they are awakened, and in some measure sensible of their guilt, they dare not come to Christ, because they cannot see that he has worthiness enough to commend them to God; they are afraid that he is not worthy enough; and yet they dislike Christ because he is a holy Saviour! And what an inconsistency is this! How can he be a worthy Saviour, and not a holy one? So that their choice does in effect contain this inconsistency in it, that they would have a Saviour who is infinitely worthy, without worthiness.

Secondly. They wish for salvation from misery without salvation from sin. They do not love misery any better than others, and hope to be saved from it; and some of them are in distress for fear of misery; but yet they would have it without being parted from their sins: which is in its own nature impossible, for the creature that is sinful, must be miserable. For misery consists in separation from the fountain of happiness, and an enmity between the creature and the chief good. But sin implies in its own nature such a separation: it is a separation from that God who is the fountain of good, and is enmity against him, and therefore necessarily brings enmity from that being against the sinner, if it be continued. Sin is the seed of misery; misery is the necessary fruit of it. It is necessary from the nature of God, who, being infinitely holy, necessarily hates it, and so necessarily arrays himself against that being who remains under the pollution and guilt of it. And it is necessary from the nature of man, and the nature of sin: misery is the natural fruit of sin, as the bud and blossom are the natural fruit of that on which they grow, and is so spoken of, Ezek. vii. 9, 10. "And mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity: I will recompense thee according to thy ways, and thine abominations that are in the midst of thee; and ye shall know that I am the Lord that smiteth. Behold the day, behold it is come; the morning is gone forth; the rod hath blossomed; pride hath budded."

Natural men would be freed from hell without being saved from sin, which is an inconsistency and impossibility; for where sin remains the reigning power, it will necessarily kindle up the flames of hell, and will bring on the torments of hell. Indeed, while men remain in the body, in the midst of the carnal objects of this world to engross the mind, to please the carnal appetites, to stupify the conscience, and lull the soul asleep; they may avoid the torments of hell for a little while, but when the body comes to be

dissolved, and all worldly objects, diversions, and entertainments come to an end, and the polluted and guilty soul comes to be stripped and turned out naked; infernal horror and misery will naturally and necessarily arise in such a soul. So that there is no such thing as being saved from hell, without being saved from sin.

Thirdly. They desire happiness without holiness. Wicked men have as earnest a desire of happiness as others. They are restlessly saying, "Who will show us any good?" And yet they are enemies to holiness. Here also they are inconsistent with themselves, for there is no such thing as happiness without holiness; the happiness of the creature consists in holiness. It is as great an inconsistency to suppose that a creature should be happy without being holy, as that a man should enjoy all the strength, and ease, and activity, and other comforts of health in sore sickness; or that the notes of a tune should be harmonious that are disproportionate and discordant. So that they would be happy, and yet would not be happy: the thing they choose contains as great an inconsistency as if they should choose light or brightness, consisting in the blackness of darkness.

4. In things that do most nearly concern them they will neither choose nor refuse. The things of religion are things that concern them in the highest degree. It is no matter of indifference to them, whether they will betake themselves in good earnest to the business of religion or not, whether they will obtain heaven, or be content with a portion in this life. But yet many natural men seem to remain in suspense about these things all the days of their lives; they are always at a loss, always halting between two opinions, which Elijah reproves, 1 Kings xviii. 21. "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." No wonder that they had nothing to answer, for their unreasonableness and inconsistency too manifestly appeared in it. Many, who hear of these subjects from their infancy never come to a thorough conclusion in their own minds, whether they will continue to go on in the way to hell, or whether they will do what must be done to escape it; they neither resolve that they will forsake all their sins, nor yet that they will retain them; they do not determine to hearken to the warnings and counsels given to them, nor yet do they fully reject them. They have life and death set before them, one or the other, but they never come to a determination which they will choose.

5. In pursuing the objects which they desire, their lusts are inconsistent with each other. It has before been shown that the lusts of one wicked man clash with those of another; but not only

is it thus; some of the lusts of the same person disagree with other lusts of his. Often, wicked men's covetousness clashes with their pride; their pride prompts them to many things that their covetousness forbids. It would be agreeable to men's pride to make a splendid show in their houses and apparel, and manner of living, who yet are not willing, through their covetousness, to be at the cost of it. So their covetousness often thwarts their sensuality. Their sensual disposition inclines them to feast their appetites, but their covetousness will not allow it.

Sometimes men's sloth and idleness clash with their other lusts, with their pride, their covetousness, and sensuality. These lusts draw them one way to obtain much of the world, in order to pamper and gratify them; but their slothfulness draws another, or rather holds them and binds their hands from obtaining these things.

IV. The outward show of wicked men disagrees with their hearts. They very often make an appearance that is exceedingly different and contrary to what they really are inwardly. They have the clothing of sheep, but the nature of wolves. Matth. vii. 15. They are like whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness. They make a show as though they believed the truth of the gospel, and believed that God was an infinitely great, and an infinitely excellent being; they make a show of great respect to God, a show of reverence and love, when indeed they have no such thing in their hearts, but the contrary. The outward show they make, which is at war with their hearts, consists either in their words, or in their behaviour.

The show they make in words is inconsistent with their hearts. Many of them profess to believe that God is an infinitely excellent being, when indeed they think that the meanest of their carnal enjoyments is more excellent than he. They profess to believe that there is another world, a heaven and a hell, when indeed they realize no such thing. They profess to believe that Christ is the only Saviour, and that they can be saved in no other; and yet they all the while believe in their hearts that there are other saviours, and particularly that they can be saviours for themselves by their own strength and righteousness.

They do abominably dissemble in the profession they make of the favour of God, and of love to him, and willingness to obey him, and desire to glorify him. They have not a jot of these things in their hearts, but all the while wholly under the influence of vile carnal principles in all that they do, and are only aiming at selfish ends and serving their lusts in all.

So did those Jews dissemble that came to Jeremiah, and desired him to inquire of the Lord. Jer. xlii. 20. "For ye dissembled

in your hearts, when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying, Pray for us unto the Lord our God; and according unto all that the Lord our God shall say, so declare unto us, and we will do it." So did the Jews of whom we read in the text, dissemble. They pretended to be enemies of gluttony, and drunkenness, and to dislike any such thing as associating with sinners; and so made a pretence of zeal against wickedness, in their opposition to Christ; when indeed they were actuated by a love to wickedness, and were enemies to Christ, for the sake of his holiness. So they pretended to be influenced by enmity against the devil in their opposition to John the Baptist, who they pretended had a devil; when indeed it was not enmity against the devil, but against God. Many pretend a great deal of love to God in what they do, when it is only love to the world at bottom. Ezek. xxxiii. 31. "And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them, for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness."

The show which they make in their prayers, is quite inconsistent with their hearts. Their very approach to God in this duty has a show of religion in it without the reality. And those things they say in their prayers are hypocritical dissembling pretences. They profess honour, reverence, trust, humility, a sense of unworthiness, repentance towards God, trust in Christ as a Mediator, a willingness to forsake sin, from which they pray to be delivered, and thankfulness for the divine mercies. In this manner they resemble the Jews spoken of in Isaiah xxix. 13, "Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth; and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men;" and in Psalm lxxviii. 36, 37, "Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. For their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant." And many of them make a show in words, in conversation with their neighbour, that is quite inconsistent with their hearts. They are forward in religious conversation, in giving an account of their experience in a show of zeal, merely to be seen of men, their God is themselves, their own honour, and the esteem of men. It is themselves whom they love and honour in every thing, and not God.

2. They often make that show in their external behaviour that is inconsistent with their hearts. Many who are destitute of the least spark of love to God, and are at utter enmity with him, will make a great show of respect to him in many things in their behaviour. They may put on a religious saint-like visage, may seem devout in keeping the sabbath, and in their attendance on religious

duties and the ordinances of worship, may in some things be very strict, and may appear to do all from a holy respect to God. So it was of old with the Israelites. Isai. lviii. 1, 2, 3. "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours."

So did the Pharisees of old. They made a great show of love and holy regard to God in their behaviour; they abounded in religious duties, they fasted twice a week, and they were very strict in many things. They were so in many duties of the moral law, they were not extortioners, nor unjust, nor adulterers, and they were exceedingly exact in duties of the ceremonial law. They gave tithes of all that they possessed, and so exact were they in paying tithes, that they tithed all the herbs of their gardens, as mint, anise, and the like, and put on an exceedingly religious countenance, and wore a righteous garment for a show of great humility; and yet had no love to God in their hearts, but were a generation of vipers, and most bitter enemies to God and Christ, and cruel persecutors of good men.

The practice of wicked men is often very inconsistent with their profession.

It is so, whether we look at the profession which they make in common with others who are brought up under the light of the gospel, or at the distinguishing and extraordinary profession which some of them make.

1. If we look at the professions which they make in common with the generality of those who are brought up under the gospel. These do in general profess that there is a God, an infinitely great and holy God, who hates sin and who is every where present, who always sees them, has his eye continually upon them, sees what they do in secret as well as what is done openly; a God, who not only knows all their words and actions, but sees all their thoughts, and who is able to do what he pleases with them, and can save or destroy them as he will.

But how does the practice of the greater part of them consist with their profession, when they live in direct opposition to his commands; when they live as though there were no God that had the care and government of the world; and as though he

were not an holy God, but altogether such an one as themselves, liking ways of sin as well as they, or as though they thought him a weak being, and not able to do them any great matter of hurt, or as though they thought they were stronger than he, and should be able to make their part good with him another day? 1 Cor. x. 22. "Do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? are we stranger than he?"

How does that wickedness, which many persons who are brought up under gospel light commit in secret, those abominable secret practices of which many young people are guilty, agree with their professing that God is every where present? These things they do not commit openly for fear of human punishment, or for fear of shame and disgrace among men; and yet they commit them boldly and live on them in the sight of God, upon whose favour they profess that their happiness infinitely more depends than on the esteem of men.

They profess to believe that there is another world, and a future judgment, and that they must in a little time stand before the judgment-seat of God, to give an account of themselves to him, and that then the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart made manifest; and that then God will call them to a strict account of their improvement of their time, and all their talents, and that for every idle word, men must give account in the day of judgment, and that then every man shall have his state everlastingly, and unalterably fixed by the sentence of the great Judge, according to the things done in the body; that they who have done well shall be invited into heaven, where they shall enjoy honour and glory, and pleasure unspeakable for evermore, and that they who have done evil, shall be sentenced and sent down to hell, into everlasting fire, with the devil and his angels, where they shall endure unspeakable torments, as in a furnace of fire without any end, or any hope, and that they shall have no rest day nor night; and that their souls shall be fixed in one or other of those states in a little time, as soon as ever the body dies.

Now how does their practice consist with such a profession, while they live idle, careless lives, little troubling themselves about the good of their souls, and have their hearts and pursuits after the vanities of the world, just as if they never expected any other world but this, going on in sins against the plainest commands, and loudest warnings, and fullest light, and conviction of their own conscience? How does this consist with the profession of a belief, that they must in a little time be called to give account of themselves to God? Would any spectator who should judge only by their practice, in the least imagine that these men expected within a few years to burn in everlasting

fire, if they did not please and serve an infinitely holy God, and to be received to an everlasting paradise of blessedness if they did; could he be persuaded to think that such men are in heart, as they profess to be, the followers of the meek, holy and humble Lamb of God, of him who laid down his life for his enemies?

2. If we look at the profession which some of them make of special and distinguishing experiences of the influence of God's grace in their hearts, their practice is very inconsistent with their profession. Persons may make a profession of such experiences, and yet be carnal and wicked men. So did some of the Galatians of whom the apostle was afraid, lest he had bestowed upon them labour in vain; they professed great experience of the sweetness and blessedness which is to be had in religion and experienced in the truths of the gospel. Gal. iv. 11. 15. "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labour in vain. Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me." At their first seeming conversion, they appeared to be exceedingly lifted up with their new light, and full of joy and comfort, and full of affection; but by this expostulation of the apostle it appears that their lives afterwards did not well agree with their profession. Some wicked men may profess that they have seen their own utter insufficiency and helplessness, their own vileness and wickedness, and have been brought to God's footstool self-emptied and self-abased, as wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked. But yet how ill does their walk and life agree with such a profession! In this none appear fuller of themselves than they; none seem to manifest more of a spirit of self-sufficiency, and of dependence on their own righteousness, or more high conceit of their own goodness, or are more ready to say to others, "Stand by thyself, come not nigh to me, for I am holier than thou;" none appear in their walk and conversation further from lying in the dust as being poor in spirit than they. So it was with the Pharisees, they pretended to be extraordinarily emptied of themselves, and to have a low thought of themselves, in their wearing a rough garment, and in so often keeping days of fasting; and yet none were more self-righteous and self-sufficient than these very men, who are set forth in sacred history as living examples of self-righteousness to all succeeding ages.

So some of them may profess that they have had great discoveries made to their souls of God's glory and excellency, and that they have seen how much more glorious God is than all earthly things. But if it be so, why do not they cleave to God, and follow him, rather than other things? If they have known God to be so

much more excellent than the things of the world, because they have had acquaintance with God, why do they in their practice cast off God for the sake of the things of the world; why do they in their practice prefer a little of the world, a little worldly gain, a little worldly honour, or a little worldly convenience, or pleasure, before God? Certainly, if God be more excellent than the whole world, as they profess that they have seen him to be, then surely he is worth more than so small a part of the world.

So they may tell what love they have found in their hearts to God, how they have found their hearts drawn out in love to him at different times. But if they love him so well, why do they take no more care to please him; why are they so careless of his honour, and of their duty to him; why do they allow themselves in practices which they know he hates, and utterly forbids?

So they may profess that they have seen the truth of the gospel, and that they not only think, but know, that the scripture is the word of God. But if it be so, why do they not take more heed to it? why do they live not only as if they were not certain of it, but as if they were certain of the contrary? If they know that those commands which are in the Bible are the commands of God, then they are worthy of the greatest regard; if they know that those promises and threatenings which are found there, are the promises and threatenings of God, then surely they should be of great weight with us. Why do they seem to be of so little weight with them?

So they may tell how God has manifested his love to their souls, has given his Spirit to witness with their spirit that they are the children of God, and that they have much communion with God. But if God has done such great things for them, and they are admitted to such unspeakable privileges above others, surely they ought to do more than others. They should not appear more carnal, and careless, and unchristian in their temper and walk than other men who make no such pretences. Thus wicked men's practice is very often inconsistent with their profession, agreeably to Titus i. 16. "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him; being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate."

VI. Their practice is inconsistent with their hope of eternal life. Men in general who live in Christian countries, hope to go to heaven, and there to possess eternal glory with God, and Christ, and holy saints and angels, though some of them have a much more confident hope than others. Some of them think that God has already made over this glory to them by firm promises, they look on heaven as their own, they think they belong to that world, and have an inheritance reserved there for them.

But the practice of wicked men is very inconsistent with such a hope, it is very displeasing to that God, and that glorious Redeemer

with whom they hope to spend their eternity in heaven. Though they live wickedly, yet they hope in a little time to go to be with an infinitely holy God, to be received by him with perfect approbation and delight, to be near to him, and to dwell in the courts of his love. They hope to enter into that same holy of holies, into which Christ the forerunner of saints has entered, and there to dwell, there to be as a pillar in the temple of God, to go no more out. Yea, they hope there to sit in that heavenly holy of holies, to be admitted to a higher privilege than the high priests were of old in the earthly holy of holies, who were admitted only to appear in the holy of holies once a year. What holiness was expected of the high priests of old who were admitted to this privilege! What holiness then may well be expected of those who hope to be admitted to a so much greater privilege! Their wicked life is very unsuitable to that state of heaven. Those who are in heaven are all perfectly holy, and so must they become if ever they go to heaven; they will perfectly hate all wickedness, and perfectly delight in the contrary. How disagreeable therefore is the hope of spending eternity in such a heaven, to their wallowing like swine in the filth and mire of sin, and feeding with such eagerness and delight on the loathsome objects of their lusts, as worms feed with pleasure on the loathsome carcass!

Their wicked life is very unfit for the company of heaven, with which they must spend an eternity, if ever they arrive there, even with the holy angels and saints. Heb. xii. 22, 23. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." How disagreeable is a carnal, worldly, sensual, impure life, to a hope of being one of such an assembly as this to all eternity!

Their wicked life is very disagreeable to the eternal business of heaven, which consists in employing their faculties altogether on holy objects, in employing their understandings in viewing and contemplating the holy perfections of God, and his wonderful works, and their wills and affections in loving God, and delighting themselves in him, and their whole souls in praising and serving him. Rev. xxii. 3, 4. "And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: and they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads." How inconsistent is a life spent in this world in the service of lust and of the devil, to a hope of spending eternity in such a holy manner as this!

Their wicked life is unfitted for the pleasure and entertainment of heaven, which consist in delighting and rejoicing in God, in loving him, and in holy communion with him. How unsuited to

a hope of enjoying such an happiness as this throughout eternity, is it to place all one's delight and happiness here in hoarding up worldly pelf, in gratifying the bodily appetites, and sensitive desires, and in those pleasures that are common to the cattle and the swine?

Wicked men hope to spend their eternity in that world, which is a world of perfect peace and love, and to dwell there for ever, where are no jars nor strife, but perfect agreement, harmony, and love for ever. Yet many of them live a life of malice and contention in this world, are very often in one strife or other, and always carry about in their breasts a malice and hatred towards some of their neighbours, and towards some of those same persons with whom they pretend to hope to spend their eternity in such perfect love and amity. If we in our thoughts compare the life that many men actually live in this world, with that life which they hope to live in another world, how ill do they consist together; how disagreeable and shocking is the comparison, or the union of them in our thoughts! How many are there who now are drunkards or unclean persons, or who live in the neglect of secret prayer, and who cast off fear and restrain prayer before God; and how many that are mere earth worms in covetousness and eagerness after the world; how many proud men whose God is their earthly honour; how many wrathful men who spend their days in hatred of their neighbour; how many such are there who hope in a little time to be with an infinitely holy God, in his glorious presence, in his holy of holies, and with Jesus Christ, and in the arms of his love, and to be of the assembly of holy angels and saints in perfect purity, holiness and love, loving, contemplating, and admiring God's glory, and enjoying unspeakable blessedness in communion with God! Thus wicked men's practice disagrees with their hopes.

VII. The practice of wicked men is inconsistent with itself.

1. Their practice at one time is inconsistent with their practice at another. They are not of a piece with themselves at different times, but are such as the apostle James compares to "a wave of the sea, driven of the wind and tossed;" and such as he called "double-minded." At one time they are of one mind, with respect to the things of religion; and at another, of another; and so have one mind against another. It is so with false professors of religion; they are not steadfast in God's covenant, nor in the practice of religion. At one time they may seem to be much affected with the things of religion, and greatly engaged in their spirits about it, as though they could even pluck out their own eyes for God and Christ's sake, may be full of religious conversation, and may seem forward in religious deeds. But, if we observe them, all their goodness is as the morning cloud, all their religiousness is over, and they appear as carnal, and senseless,

and as irreligious as ever; their religious affections are all gone, their religious practice is gone, and "it is happened unto them according to the true proverb. The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

So it is with the hearers, that hear the word of God, and anon with joy receive it, but in time of temptation fall away. So it was with many of Christ's followers; they followed him for a while, and by and by left him.

There were some who seemed to believe in Christ and followed him for a while; but Christ did not commit himself to them, he knew they were of an unstable mind, and would not be consistent with themselves. Some of them were for a while greatly affected with his preaching and with the miracles that he wrought, and it is said of them that they glorified God who had given such power to men, and said, "Never man spake like this man." John vii. 46. And it seems as though some of the same Jews who had their affections so raised when Christ was coming into Jerusalem, and who cried, "Hosannah to the son of David, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord;" did presently after cry, "Crucify him, crucify him!" There are many professors like those, and like the Israelites, that sang God's praise, and soon forgat his works, and waited not for his counsel, that "turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow;" that is, a bow that missed the mark to which it seemed to direct the arrow. The arrow seems to be pointed right, as though it would hit the mark, but yet the bow unexpectedly tends quite another way.

There are many disciples like Judas, who was at one time a disciple, and a traitor at another. It is commonly so that when false professors come to be tried by any remarkable allurements of the world, or by special difficulties which they meet with in the way of duty, that their practice at such times is quite inconsistent with their practice at other times. While times are smooth, and the way plain, and the external practice of religion seems to be consistent with their worldly interests, they are very religious; but when times are changed, and they cannot be religious without seeing them crossed, they appear quite another sort of men.

Thus their practice at one time is inconsistent with their practice at another.

2. Their practice in some things is inconsistent with their practice in others at the same time.

First. Their moral and religious practice in some things does not consist with their irreligious and impure practice in others. False professors are very commonly widely different in this respect from those who are sincere and upright. Sincere Christians are universally holy; they have regard to all God's commands; it is

their sincere desire, aim, and endeavour to do their duty in every respect. But it is generally far otherwise with hypocrites; in some things they are like Christians, in others like heathens. Sometimes they appear earnestly religious in duties that immediately respect God, as in attending ordinances, and in appearing devout in external duties of the first table; but in duties that respect their neighbour, there is but little appearance of Christianity. Some behave themselves like saints in God's house, and like devils at home. Some seem to be very religious abroad, in the house of God, and also at the houses of their neighbours, at private meetings, and in religious conferences; but if you follow them into their own families, and observe their carriage there towards those who dwell under the same roof, towards their wives, or husbands, or children, or servants, their behaviour there does not at all consist with the other. So some may carry themselves well in their families, and yet are wretchedly negligent of the religion of the closet. Some seem to be religious men, who are not honest men; some are honest men, and are not religious. They are willing to pay their debts, to speak the truth, and to avoid all knavish actions, all low and underground management; but as to religion, or to seeking God in the religious use of his ordinances, and in reading his holy word, in meditation and prayer, there is but little of this to be seen in them.

Some are honest men with respect to strict commutative justice, but they are not charitable men; they are selfish, covetous, close, and unmerciful. Some seem to be generous and liberal, and yet are very proud and haughty; their honour is their God. Some are very strict and exemplary as to all that can be seen of men, but secretly they live in some abominable practice. So their practice does not consist with itself; it is not of a piece. God complains of this self-inconsistence in Israel of old. Hosea vii. 8. "Ephraim hath mixed himself among the people; Ephraim is a cake not turned." "He hath mixed himself among the people;" that is, he was conversant with the heathen nations, and mingled the religion and customs of an Israelite with those of the heathen; so that he was inconsistent with himself, he was partly an Israelite and partly a heathen. "He is a cake not turned," alluding to their custom of baking cakes on the hearth, or in the sun; where, if they were not turned, one side would be baked, and the other raw. So they on one side seemed to appear religious, and like saints, but on the other, wicked and impure. So it was with the Pharisees; in some things they appeared eminently religious, but in others they behaved themselves as some of the vilest of men. Matth. xxiii. 14. 23. "Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence, make long prayers; therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation. Wo unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint, and anise, and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." A true saint is sanctified throughout, in soul, body, and spirit; he has put off the old man with his deeds, and has put on the new man; he is all over a new creature. He has not only a new hand and head, but he is a new man, all the members are new. But hypocrites are monsters; they have a saint's tongue, and a devil's heart. The members do not well consist together. They are inconsistent with themselves as they go about to serve two masters, God and Mammon, which Christ has taught us to be a great inconsistence. They are alike inconsistent as the Samaritans were, who would serve the God of Israel, and their own god too. 2 Kings xvii. 28, &c. "Then one of the priests, whom they had carried away from Samaria, came and dwelt in Bethel, and taught them how they should fear the Lord. Howbeit every nation made gods of their own, and put them in the houses of the high places which the Samaritans had made, every nation in their cities wherein they dwelt."

There is the like inconsistence in them as was in Judas, who betrayed Christ with a kiss. How ill did those two things in Judas consist together, his coming to him, and kissing him; his seeming to show himself his friend, and at the same time betraying him to death! But it was no greater inconsistency than is commonly found with hypocritical professors, who carry themselves as Christ's friends, and as though he were very dear to them in some things, and yet act the part of mortal enemies in others, and by their wicked behaviour do indeed betray his cause and interest.

Secondly. Their wicked practice in one thing is inconsistent with their wicked practice in others. It is a common thing for wicked men to quarrel with God for permitting those things which they allow themselves, and practice with delight. It is common for wicked men to ascribe the blame of their wickedness to God, therein following their first father, Adam. So men will often lay the blame of their being unconverted, and having lived so wicked a life, so carnal, careless, and evil a life, to God, and especially under conviction, to quarrel with God for it; and yet they approved of those things which they did themselves, with full consent and approbation.

And, again. It is common for wicked men to contend with men, and hate their neighbour for doing the same thing that

they do themselves, and allow in themselves. So an unjust man, a backbiter and reviler, a revengeful man, will *condemn* in others the sin which he allows in himself. And so, many other instances might be mentioned. And thus I have showed through all the instances proposed, how wicked men are inconsistent with themselves.

APPLICATION.

1. Hence we may see the woful ruin which sin has brought on the nature of man. Man was not thus in his first estate. If we had nothing but the light of nature, or the light of our own reason to guide us, that would be sufficient to lead us to conclude that man in his first estate was not made thus by his Creator, who has made other things in such excellent order and harmony. We see that God hath so made the world, that one thing sweetly harmonizes with another, all things are adapted to each other, the nature of one thing to the nature of another; one thing to be subservient to another; and all things subject to the laws that the Creator has fixed.

We therefore, without the scripture, should have all reason to conclude that man, the most noble of all the creatures in the visible world, was not made in this state of woful inconsistency with himself; so that all the faculties of his nature are at war with each other, and at war with themselves; so that now there is nothing but the most dreadful confusion to be seen.

But the scripture teaches us plainly that God saw all things that he had created and made, and behold, they were very good; and particularly that God made man upright, and that it is himself that has brought ruin on his own nature. In man's first estate all things were in perfect order in his nature. There shone such a light in his understanding as led him to right judgments of things, all the dictates of his understanding were consistent one with another. And then his reason, the superior faculty, kept its place, and bare rule in him over the other faculties, and there was no principle or faculty of his nature but what was subject to its dictates, nothing rose up in rebellion against it. His will then was agreeable to his reason, and agreeable with itself; there was a perfect harmony between his outward appearance and his inward character; his mouth and his heart, and his mouth and practice then agreed together, and his practice then was of a piece; until he ate of the forbidden fruit, all was in perfect order, and peace, and decorum, both within and without.

But what was the consequence when man hearkened to the devil, and rebelled against his Maker? We learn, by what has been said under this doctrine, that then the Spirit of God de-

parted from him, and with his influence, God's holy image also, the life, the crown, and glory of his nature left him, and all light, and regularity, and order were gone, and a worse darkness and confusion succeeded than was in the primitive chaos when it was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And such is the woful confusion of the nature of all men now in their fallen state. Now their reason determines one thing, and their governing practical judgment the reverse of it; and their judgment in some things is utterly inconsistent with their judgment in others. Now the will is in no consistency with the reason, but commonly determines directly contrary to its dictates. Men's wills are in such bondage and slavery to their lusts, that they are not only determined contrary to their own consciences to choose those things which their reason tells them are unjust, and vile, and unbecoming their nature, but also those things which their reason at the same time declares to be exceedingly against their own highest interest, even so as to tend to their everlasting perdition. Yea, their dispositions are not only contrary to their own reason and consciences, but contrary to themselves; there is not only war between faculty and faculty, but the very same faculty is at war with itself, so that they do in some respects choose and refuse the same things at the same time. There are some things that they seem earnestly to wish for, and yet indeed are at the same time utterly averse to, and refuse, and will by no means accept of when offered; yea, they will not have them though they are urged and entreated, and pleaded with for years together to accept of them. So inconsistent are their dispositions with themselves, that they will not have spiritual and divine things as they are, nor yet will they have them otherwise. They do not like God as he is, they find abundance of fault with him, they are urged to accept of him as their God, but they will by no means comply with it. They reject him, and have an enmity against him; they love to keep at a distance from him, and to have as little as possible to do with him, and will not hearken to him, or submit to him, but are ever maintaining a kind of warfare against him, because they do not like him as he is. And yet they would not like him if he were any otherwise. If it were possible that he could be altered from what he is in any respect whatsoever, they would refuse to accept of him as their God then. They are enemies to him because he is so holy and just a God, and yet they would not like him if he were unholy and unjust; they do not like his Almighty power, and yet they would not like him if he were weak. They also dislike his knowing all things, and yet they would dislike him if he were ignorant. They quarrel with God for the exercise

of his infinite mercy and grace to others, and the more for its being so great in some instances, in being exercised towards those who are so unworthy; and yet they would not like him if he were not infinitely merciful; they would wish him to be merciful enough to pardon the most unworthy, and yet sometimes quarrel with him because he is no more merciful.

Now there is a similar inconsistency in them with themselves in that they do not like men for being godly; they have an enmity against such sort of men: and at the same time, they do not like those who are godly, they hate men for being wicked, and will have a bitter spirit against them for it. The world in its fallen state cannot agree with the church of God; it has always had a spite against it, and has almost always from the beginning of the world hitherto been persecuting it; and yet neither can they agree among themselves, but are at the same time contending and quarrelling with one another. And as there is no suiting them in this world, so neither is there any suiting them in another; they would neither go to heaven, nor to hell. They do not like heaven because it is holy; and yet they would not like it, if it were a world of wickedness. And such is the jarring and confusion that is in their disposition, that those things that they do choose are impossibilities, and self-contradictions, and self-inconsistences. They would have a sufficient Saviour and not a holy one; they would have one good, and excellent, and holy enough to save them, and yet would not have one with any holiness at all. They have a mind to have salvation from misery, without salvation from sin; when sin is their misery. They have a mind to have light, and yet to keep darkness without light; they would have a light, consisting in darkness; and sweet, consisting in bitterness; and good, consisting in evil. They would have such a sort of happiness as is impossible in its own nature; for they would have happiness with unholiness, which is as much as to say they would be *happy* men, and yet remain *destroyed* and *ruined*. And when life and death are set before them to choose, and they are urged to make their choice, and told that they must certainly have one or the other, that there is no possibility of avoiding it; yet they will come to a deliberate determinate choice to have neither one nor the other. They are always halting between two opinions, they are always choosing and yet never come to a choice. Instead of those holy principles that man had in his heart at first, that sweetly consented one with another, he has now introduced into his soul a number of vile and hateful lusts, that clash one with another: pride clashing with covetousness, and covetousness thwarting sensuality, and sloth crushing all these; and instead of the purity in body and mind, which man had at first, he is now, if he has

any show of purity, become like a whited sepulchre, that is beautifully adorned outside, and within full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness. Their hearts disagree with their hearts, and their mouths disagree with their hearts; they have the visage and show of saints, and the hearts of devils. Their prayers are filled up with thanksgiving, adoration, great honour to God, praise and glory to him, a show of humility before him, a show of repentance for sin, trust, thankfulness, desire of obedience, and trust in Christ alone; when within is nothing but a slight and contempt of God, enmity against God, distrust of God, pride, self-righteousness, obstinacy and disobedience, without one jot or tittle of honour, or love, or trust, or humility, or repentance, or obedience, or any of those things that there is a show of in their prayers. And now they say and profess one thing, and practice another; they will show one thing to God, and do another, and will live all their days in this world carnally, contentious, and alienated from God, in the indulgence of brutish lusts and filthiness; and yet hope when they die to go to be with him, and in eternal communion with him in perfect holiness, and with holy angels, spending an eternity in holy contemplation and praise, and to have these things for their everlasting happiness. And when they seem to practice well for a time it lasts but a little while, but their practice at one time is utterly inconsistent with that at another. Yea, if they were narrowly observed, their practice at the same time is inconsistent with itself: saints at church, and heathen at home; saints before the world, heathen in secret; with the tongues and faces of the children of God, and with the hearts of the children of the devil.

Such work has the fall made in the nature of man, such a creature as this is man become, instead of shining as at first, in the holy and lovely image of God. Thus has the fall of man ruined God's workmanship. And if the fall has *thus* ruined man, what can be more effectually ruined? Does not this show that it is indeed so, that man is in a lost and undone condition; and can it be expected that any other can ever restore to him the divine image, but only that same God that made him at first? And how vain are the attempts of natural men to rectify their natures in their own strength, wherein is such woful ruin and confusion! And is there not need of a mighty Saviour in order to this?

2. This subject may be applied in the way of conviction to natural men, in several particulars.

1. Hence you may see your Folly. Wisdom is ever consistent with itself, and wise men are not wont to act inconsistently. Self-inconsistency in temporal things is ever looked

upon as a note of folly. Those men, that talk very inconsistently, are accounted to talk very foolishly; and so those men that act inconsistenly with themselves in temporal matters, are looked upon as acting very absurdly and ridiculously, and it is common with men to treat such with derision. Certainly, then, to be so exceedingly self-inconsistent in such great concerns as we have spoken of, is the highest degree of folly.

The inconsistency of the judgment of wicked men shows their folly. It shows the foolishness of those practical judgments they govern themselves by, that they make them contrary to the plain dictates of their own reason. Men oftentimes count the judgments of others very foolish, because they are very inconsistent with other men's reason, though their judgments are formed accecording to the best light of their own reason; but how much more foolish is it for men, in such things as infinitely concern them, to make such practical judgments of things as are plainly contrary not only to other men's reason, but to their own; so as to determine their will and their practice by those judgments! as for instance, when men's practical judgment and conclusion within themselves, by which they determine their choice and practice, is, that it is best for them for the present, to neglect their souls and seek the vanities of this world, which are but for a moment, more than their eternal welfare.

And how does it show the folly of men's judgment when some of their judgments are inconsistent with others; as when in one thing they will judge that a long continued eternity is of less importance than this short and fleeting life! So it shows the great folly of men's wills and dispositions, that they are so inconsistent, that in some respects they will both choose and refuse the same things, will wish and pray for them, and take pains for them, and yet will not have them when offered. How madly would a man be looked upon to act, that should so act in temporal concerns, if he was sick and like to perish for want of a certain medicine, and should wish and long for that medicine, and ask others to seek it for him, and yet when it was bought and offered, he should utterly refuse it!

What folly does it argue that men's dispositions are so inconsistent with each other, that there is no suiting them with any thing! they are pleased neither with piping nor mourning, with eating nor fasting; they will not have God, or Christ, or heaven as they are, and yet will not have either any otherwise. How would men, if they manifested such a disposition in temporal things, often be hissed at, as most ridiculous, childish, and foolish; yea, and be accounted to act like madmen! and what folly does it discover, that they will choose, and accept of nothing but that which is impossible in its own nature,

and a self-contradiction, as when they will have happiness without holiness. If any man should act thus in temporal things; if he would have no house, because he could not build one in the air; if he refused to go, because he could not go without feet; or to see, because he could not see without eyes, what words would be thought adequate to describe his folly! Yet this is the very folly of sinners with regard to their salvation.

How would men be looked upon if they acted thus in their temporal affairs! If they must inevitably perish in the winter, if they did not labour in the summer, and yet spend all the summer in halting between two opinions; or if they were sick with some deadly disease, and were told that they must inevitably die if they did not send for a physician, yet were undetermined, and when the distemper increased upon them, still continued undetermined, and when it was come to extremity, and seemed very near death, still could not come to a conclusion; or if an house should be on fire over their heads, and they could not make up their minds to flee from under it.

And what folly does it argue for men, that their practices are so inconsistent with their hearts, and that they say one thing and do another, and so are unsteady in their practice, and inconsistent with themselves at different times! It is looked upon as great folly, and what persons are much to be ashamed of, to be so unsteady in temporal matters, to undo one day what they did another; and so, in their practice in some things to be inconsistent with their practice in others; in one thing to act like a friend, and in another like an enemy. Persons that do so in temporals are abhorred of men, and looked upon as not fit for human society.

2. You may hereby be convinced of your Misery. A man cannot be happy, and cannot but be miserable, with whom it is thus. It shows a man to be undone. He, whose nature is brought into such violation, is evidently brought into a state of ruin. Where there is such self-inconsistency and self-opposition, a man is at war with himself, and therefore must be miserable. It is a calamity for a man not to be at peace with his neighbour; and to live in contention with those that are about him, but certainly it is a much greater calamity for him to be at war with himself; to have his judgment at war with his judgment, and his will at war with his reason and conscience, and his will at war with itself, and one lust thwarting another, and his outward man at war with his inward man; his mouth contradicting his heart, his practice contradicting his profession, and contradicting itself. It is impossible that such a man should enjoy any happiness as long as things are thus within him. Do what you will here, you cannot make him happy; if you take him and place him in a palace, and set him on a throne, and clothe him in the robes of [illegible], and put

a crown of gold on his head, and set before him the richest dainties, feed him and feast him as much as you will, still he that so disagrees with himself, is a miserable wretch. Though he may be stupid, yet it is impossible he should enjoy any true peace or rest. How should he, in whom all things are in such utter confusion and uproar within, and in whom there is so much self-opposition?

This may convince us of the truth, and show us the reason of Isai. lvii. 20, 21, "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked."

How should he have any peace, who is his own enemy, who chooses and practices these things which his own conscience condemns, and which his own reason tells him tend to his own ruin? How should he have any peace, that hates his own soul and loves his own death, and that has one lust holding him one way, and another the contrary, so as in some respects to choose and refuse the same thing, to wish for a thing that at the same time he hates and refuses, and so goes on from day to day in warring against himself?

3. This shows your Inexcusableness. By this inconsistency with yourself, you are condemned out of your own mouth in that you act contrary to your own conscience. Your own conscience condemns you in your will, and practice being contrary to your own reason; your own reason condemns you in acting contrary to your profession; your own profession condemns you in the sense in which the apostle speaks of an heretic as being condemned of himself. Titus iii. 10, 11. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself:" i. e. he in departing from his' former profession, is inconsistent with himself: his present heretical tenets are contrary to his former solemn profession, and therefore that former profession condemns him.

Consider how inexcusable you, who are thus inconsistent with yourself in your wickedness, will appear at the last day; when you come to stand before the judgment-seat of God, when you are by him called to an account for your wicked life, how will your mouth be stopped. When you are called to an account why you have preferred things of such short and uncertain continuance as the things of this vain world, to the great things of the eternal world, what will you have to say for yourself, when it shall appear that herein you acted in direct opposition to the plain dictates of your own reason, and that this choice is inconsistent with the judgment and choice you were wont to make in temporal things? And what will you say for yourself when you are called to give

an account why you rejected God, and Christ, and heaven for their holiness; when it so plainly appears that you would not like them, and would not have accepted them if they had been any other way than holy?

It will then appear that you have voluntarily rejected Christ and his great salvation, and refused to accept of heaven, and that you are condemned of yourself in it, in that at the same time you evinced the great necessity of those things in praying for them, and doing many things in order to the obtaining of them.

When it shall then appear how you had a mind to have impossibilities: as a sufficiently worthy Saviour, and not an holy one; salvation from misery, and not salvation from sin, the source of all misery; and happiness without holiness; it shall from hence most plainly appear that you did in effect utterly refuse to accept of any Saviour or any salvation at all, and would not be saved from misery at all, and refused to accept of any happiness at all, because you would have no salvation, no happiness, but such as was impossible in the nature of things, such a salvation as was not, and could not be; and then how just will it appear to your own conscience, and to the world that you should e'en go without salvation!

And when it shall appear how you had life and death set before you, and were told the necessity of coming to a choice, and were so often urged to it, and had so much opportunity for it, and yet refused; how just will it appear that divine justice should make your choice for you, when you refused to make any for yourself!

And how will you appear condemned out of your own mouth, when you shall be called to an account by the Judge, why you so often professed to God in your prayers that he was an infinitely great and holy God, and yet never feared him: and why you so often said to God that he was a sovereign and righteous God, and yet never submitted to him; and why you so often said to him that he was an all-sufficient and faithful God, and yet never would put your trust in him; and why you so often said to him that he was an infinitely glorious, and excellent, and good God, and yet never loved him; and why you so often owned that he was an infinitely gracious and bountiful God, and that you had received abundance of kindness from him, and owned him to be the author of all those good things of your life that you enjoy, and yet never were truly thankful to him, but improved those things that you owned were the gifts of God, against himself who was the giver of them; why you so often owned in your prayers before God that you were a poor sinful, vile creature for your sins, and yet never would forsake your sins, and begged of God to keep you from sin, and yet carelessly and wilfully went on in the commission of sin? What will you say to such interrogations of the Judge of

heaven and earth? Will not your mouth be stopped, when it shall appear that what has already so often proceeded out of your own mouth, does so much condemn you? And what will hypocrites and self-pretenders to experiences say, who have told what discoveries they had of the glory of God, of Christ, and of heaven; when the Judge inquires of them, why they set so light by this God, and did so prefer the dust of the earth and the filth of sin, before him? When those who have often told what love they have felt to the Lord Jesus Christ, are asked why they took no more care to please and honour him, and why they rather chose from time to time to reject him than sacrifice their worldly interest.

So when wicked men are inquired of why, when they professed to believe a future state, they took no more pains to prepare for it; why, when they professed to be the followers of Christ the Lamb of God, they were no more like him; why, when they owned him for their head, and expressed such wonderful love to him, they could turn and become his enemies; why, when they lived in hope of a life of such unspeakable glory in heaven, they set their affections wholly on this world; why, seeing they made such a show of regard to God and their duty at one time, they discovered such a total disregard at another; why, when they made such pretences to religion, and had such appearances of it in some things, they were so irreligious and wicked in others; what will they answer? Wicked men will appear self-condemned every way: their own reason and their own consciences, their own mouths and their own actions have condemned them: their reason and consciences will still condemn them, and God will condemn them, and men and angels will and must condemn them: so that they will appear universally condemned; they will have nothing to say for themselves, nor will any one have any thing to say for them.

4. If you are so inconsistent with yourself, you need not wonder that God will enter into no Friendship with you, or that he does not receive you into his Favour. Many natural men are ready to wonder that God will not receive them into favour—they do so much in religion.

But if you consider what has been said, you need not wonder at it. A wise man will make no friendship with another who is very inconsistent with himself in those things wherein men are concerned with him. He will not associate himself with him, nor care to have much to communicate with him; for men know that such persons are not to be depended on. One does not know where to find them, nor how to suit them, and if they will be so inconsistent with themselves, certainly they will not be very consistent with others that trust them. God therefore justly refuses

to receive such persons into union with him. It is not consistent with his divine wisdom to give himself to them in a covenant relation.

No wonder that Christ will not commit himself to such persons as these; John ii. 23, 24, 25. "Now, when he was in Jerusalem at the passover, in the feast day, many believed in his name, when they saw the miracles which he did. But Jesus did not commit himself unto them, because he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man; for he knew what was in man." Christ knew that there was no dependence to be had upon them; he knew they would not prove consistent with themselves.

5. How vain and inconsistent is the Dependence of wicked men on themselves! If this be the case with natural men, if all natural men are as we have heard, so absurdly inconsistent with themselves, how unreasonable is their high thought of themselves, and their trusting to their own goodness, to their own prayers, and their other performances!

And that they do so, is an evident sign of their woful ignorance of themselves. If such persons saw themselves as they are, and to be such as we have described them, certainly they would be far from trusting in their own excellency and goodness, but would see themselves to be polluted, wretched, miserable lost creatures, and would no more say in their hearts, "I am rich, and increased with goods;" but would rather condemn themselves, and cry out with self-abhorrence and amazement, "Unclean, unclean, undone, undone!"

SERMON XII.

ISAIAH xxxii. 2.

And a man shall be as an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest: as rivers of water in a dry place; as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.

In these words we may observe,

1. The person who is here prophesied of and commended, viz.: the Lord Jesus Christ, the King spoken of in the preceding verse, who shall reign in righteousness. This king is abundantly prophesied of in the Old Testament, and especially in this prophecy of Isaiah. Glorious predictions were from time to time uttered by the prophets concerning that great King who was to come: there is no subject which is spoken of in so magnificent and exalted a style by the prophets of the Old Testament, as the Messiah. They saw his day and rejoiced, and searched diligently, together with the angels, into those things. 1 Peter i. 11, 12. "Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into."

We are told here that "*a man* shall be a hiding place from the wind," &c. There is an emphasis in the words, that "*a man*" should be this. If these things had been said of God, it would not be strange under the Old Testament; for God is frequently called a hiding place for his people, a refuge in time of trouble, a strong rock, and a high tower. But what is so remarkable is, that they are said of "*a man.*" But this is a prophecy of the Son of God incarnate.

2. The Things here foretold of him, and the Commendations given him.

"He shall be a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest:" That is, he shall be the safety and defence of his people, to which they shall flee for protection in the time of their danger and trouble. To him they shall flee as one who is abroad, and sees a terrible storm arising, makes haste to some shelter to secure himself; so that however furious is the tempest, yet he is safe within, and the wind and rain, though they beat never so impetuously upon the roof and walls, are no annoyance unto him.

He shall be as "rivers of water in a dry place." This is an allusion to the deserts of Arabia, which was an exceedingly hot and dry country. One may travel there many days, and see no sign of a river, brook, or spring, nothing but a dry and parched wilderness; so that travellers are ready to be consumed with thirst, as the children of Israel were when they were in this wilderness, when they were faint because there was no water. Now when a man finds Jesus Christ, he is like one that has been travelling in those deserts till he is almost consumed with thirst, and who at last finds a river of cool and clear water. And Christ was typified by the river of water that issued out of the rock for the children of Israel in this desert: he is compared to a river, because there is such a plenty and fulness in him.

He is the "shadow of a great rock in a weary land." Allusion is still made to the desert of Arabia. It is not said as the shadow of a tree, because in some places of that country, there is nothing but dry sand and rocks for a vast space together, not a tree to be seen; and the sun beats exceedingly hot upon the sands, and all the shade to be found there, where travellers can rest and shelter themselves from the scorching sun, is under some great rock. They who come to Christ find such rest and refreshment as the weary traveller in that hot and desolate country finds under the shadow of a great rock.

We propose to speak to three propositions that are explicatory of the several parts of the text.

I. There is in Christ Jesus abundant foundation of peace and safety for those who are in fear and danger. "A man shall be an hiding place from the wind, a covert from the tempest."

II. There is in Christ provision for the satisfaction, and full contentment, of the needy and thirsty soul. He shall be "as rivers of water in a dry place."

III. There are quiet rest, and sweet refreshment in Christ Jesus for him who is weary. He shall be "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

I. There is in Christ Jesus abundant foundation of peace and safety for those who are in fear and danger.

The fears and dangers to which men are subject, are of two kinds; temporal and eternal. Men are frequently in distress from fear of temporal evils. We live in an evil world, where we are liable to an abundance of sorrows and calamities. A great part of our lives is spent in sorrowing for present or past evils, and in fearing those which are future. What poor, distressed creatures are we, when God is pleased to send his judgments among us! If he visits a place with mortal and prevailing sickness, what terror seizes our hearts! If any person is taken sick, and trembles for his life, or if our near friends are at the point of death, or in many other dangers, how fearful is our condition! Now there is sufficient foundation for peace and safety to those exercised with such fears, and brought into such dangers. But Christ is a refuge in all trouble; there is a foundation for rational support and peace in him, whatever threatens us. He, whose heart is fixed, trusting in Christ, need not be afraid of any evil tidings. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so Christ is round about them that fear him."

But it is the other kind of fear and danger to which we have a principal respect; the fear and danger of God's wrath. The fears of a terrified conscience, the fearful expectation of the dire fruits of sin, and the resentment of an angry God, these are infinitely the most dreadful. If men are in danger of those things, and are not asleep, they will be more terrified than with the fears of any outward evil. Men are in a most deplorable condition, as they are by nature exposed to God's wrath; and if they are sensible how dismal their case is, will be in dreadful fears and dismal expectations.

God is pleased to make some sensible of their true condition. He lets them see the storm that threatens them, how black the clouds are, and how impregnated with thunder, that it is a burning tempest, that they are in danger of being speedily overtaken by it, that they have nothing to shelter themselves from it, and that they are in danger of being taken away by the fierceness of his anger.

It is a fearful condition when one is smitten with a sense of the dreadfulness of God's wrath, when he has his heart impressed with the conviction that the great God is not reconciled to him, that he holds him guilty of these and those sins, and that he is angry enough with him to condemn him for ever. It is dreadful to lie down and rise up, it is dreadful to eat and drink, and to walk about in God's anger from day to day. One, in such a case, is ready to be afraid of every thing; he is afraid of meeting God's wrath wherever he goes. He has no peace in his mind, but there is a

dreadful sound in his ears; his mind is afflicted and tossed with tempest, and not comforted, and courage is ready to fail, and the spirit ready to sink with fear; for how can a poor worm bear the wrath of the great God, and what would not he give for peace of conscience, what would not he give if he could find safety! When such fears exist to a great degree, or are continued a long time, they greatly enfeeble the heart, and bring it to a trembling posture and disposition.

Now for such as these there is abundant foundation for peace and safety in Jesus Christ, and this will appear from the following things:

1. Christ has undertaken to save all such from what they fear, if they come to him. It is his professional business; the work in which he engaged before the foundation of the world. It is what he always had in his thoughts and intentions; he undertook from everlasting to be the refuge of those that are afraid of God's wrath. His wisdom is such, that he would never undertake a work for which he is not sufficient. If there were some in so dreadful a case that he was not able to defend them, or so guilty that it was not fit that he should save them, then he never would have undertaken for them. Those who are in trouble and distressing fear, if they come to Jesus Christ, have this to ease them of their fears, that Christ has promised them that he will protect them; that they come upon his invitation; that Christ has plighted his faith for their security if they will close with him; and that he is engaged by covenant to God the Father that he will save those afflicted and distressed souls that come to him.

Christ, by his own free act, has made himself the surety of such, he has voluntarily put himself in their stead; and if justice has any thing against them, he has undertaken to answer for them. By his own act, he has engaged to be responsible for them; so that if they have exposed themselves to God's wrath, and to the stroke of justice, it is not their concern, but his, how to answer or satisfy for what they have done. Let there be never so much wrath that they have deserved, they are as safe as if they never had deserved any; because he has undertaken to stand for them, let it be more or less. If they are in Christ Jesus, the storm does of course light on him, and not on them; as when we are under a good shelter, the storm, that would otherwise come upon our heads, lights upon the shelter.

2. He is chosen and appointed of the Father to this work. There needs be no fear nor jealousy, whether the Father will approve of this undertaking of Christ Jesus, whether he will accept of him as a surety, or whether he will be willing that his wrath should be poured upon his own dear Son, instead of us miserable sinners. For there was an agreement with him concerning it be-

fore the world was; it was a thing much upon God's heart, that his Son Jesus Christ should undertake this work, and it was the Father that sent him into the world. It is as much the act of God the Father as it is of the Son. Therefore, when Christ was near the time of his death, he tells the Father that he had finished the work which he gave him to do. Christ is often called God's elect, or his chosen, because he was chosen by the Father for this work; and God's anointed, for the words *Messiah* and *Christ* signify *anointed*, because he is by God appointed and fitted for this work.

3. If we are in Christ Jesus, justice and the law have its course with respect to our sins, without our hurt. The foundation of the sinner's fear and distress is the justice and the law of God; they are against him, and they are unalterable, they must have their course. Every jot and tittle of the law must be fulfilled, heaven and earth shall be destroyed, rather than justice should not take place; there is no possibility of sin's escaping justice.

But yet if the distressed trembling soul who is afraid of justice, would fly to Christ, he would be a safe hiding place. Justice and the threatening of the law will have their course as fully, while he is safe and untouched, as if he were to be eternally destroyed. Christ bears the stroke of justice, and the curse of the law falls fully upon him; Christ bears all that vengeance that belongs to the sin that has been committed by him, and there is no need of its being borne twice over. His temporal sufferings, by reason of the infinite dignity of his person, are fully equivalent to the eternal sufferings of a mere creature. And then his sufferings answer for him who flees to him as well as if they were his own, for indeed they are his own by virtue of the union between Christ and him. Christ has made himself one with them; he is the head, and they are the members. Therefore, if Christ suffers for the believer, there is no need of his suffering; and what needs he to be afraid? His safety is not only consistent with absolute justice, but it is consistent with the tenor of the law. The law leaves fair room for such a thing as the answering of a surety. If the end of punishment in maintaining the authority of the law and the majesty of the government is fully secured by the sufferings of Christ as his surety, then the law of God, according to the true and fair interpretation of it, has its course as much in the sufferings of Christ, as it would have in his own sufferings. The threatening, "thou shalt surely die," is properly fulfilled in the death of Christ, as it is fairly to be understood. Therefore if those who are afraid will go to Jesus Christ, they need to fear nothing from the threatening of the law. The threatening of the law has nothing to do with them.

4. Those who come to Christ, need not be afraid of God's wrath for their sins; for God's honour will not suffer by their escaping

punishment and being made happy. The wounded soul is sensible that he has affronted the majesty of God, and looks upon God as a vindicator of his honour; as a jealous God that will not be mocked, an infinitely great God that will not bear to be affronted, that will not suffer his authority and majesty to be trampled on, that will not bear that his kindness should be abused. A view of God in this light terrifies awakened souls. They think how exceedingly they have sinned, how they have sinned against light, against frequent and long continued calls and warnings; and how they have slighted mercy, and been guilty of turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, taking encouragement from God's mercy to go on in sin against him; and they fear that God is so affronted at the contempt and slight which they have cast upon him, that he, being careful of his honour, will never forgive them, but will punish them. But if they go to Christ, the honour of God's majesty and authority will not be in the least hurt by their being freed and made happy. For what Christ has done has repaired God's honour to the full. It is a greater honour to God's authority and majesty, that, rather than it should be wronged, so glorious a person would suffer what the law required. It is surely a wonderful display of the honour of God's majesty, to see an infinite and eternal person dying for its being wronged. And then Christ by his obedience, by that obedience which he undertook for our sakes, has honoured God abundantly more than the sins of any of us have dishonoured him, how many soever, and how great soever. How great an honour is it to God's law that so great a person is willing to submit to it, and to obey it! God hates our sins, but not more than he delights in Christ's obedience which he performed on our account. This is a sweet savour to him, a savour of rest. God is abundantly compensated, he desires no more; Christ's righteousness is of infinite worthiness and merit.

5. Christ is a person so dear to the Father, that those who are in Christ need not be at all jealous of being accepted upon his account. If Christ is accepted they must of consequence be accepted, for they are in Christ, as members, as parts, as the same. They are the body of Christ, his flesh and his bones. They that are in Christ Jesus, are one spirit; and therefore, if God loves Christ Jesus, he must of necessity accept of those that are in him, and that are of him. But Christ is a person exceedingly dear to the Father, the Father's love to the Son is really infinite. God necessarily loves the Son; God could as soon cease to be, as cease to love the Son. He is God's elect, in whom his soul delighteth; he is his beloved Son in whom he

is well pleased; he loved him before the foundation of the world, and had infinite delight in him from all eternity.

A terrified conscience, therefore, may have rest here, and abundant satisfaction that he is safe in Christ, and that there is not the least danger but that he shall be accepted, and that God will be at peace with him in Christ.

6. God has given an open testimony that Christ has done and suffered enough, and that he is satisfied with it, by his raising him from the dead. Christ, when he was in his passion, was in the hands of justice, he was God's prisoner for believers, and it pleased God to bruise him, and put him to grief, and to bring him into a low state; and when he raised him from the dead, he set him at liberty, whereby he declared that it was enough. If God was not satisfied, why did he set Christ at liberty so soon? he was in the hands of justice, why did not God pour out more wrath upon him, and hold him in the chains of darkness longer? God raised him up and opened the prison doors to him, because he desired no more. And now surely there is free admittance for all sinners into God's favour through this risen Saviour, there is enough done, and God is satisfied; as he has declared and sealed to it by the resurrection of Christ, who is alive, and lives for evermore, and is making intercession for poor, distressed souls that come unto him.

7. Christ has the dispensation of safety and deliverance in his own hands, so that we need not fear but that, if we are united to him, we may be safe. God has given him all power in heaven and in earth, to give eternal life to whomsoever comes to him. He is made head over all things to the church, and the work of salvation is left with himself, he may save whom he pleases, and defend those that are in him by his own power. What greater ground of confidence could God have given us than that the Mediator, who died for us and intercedes for us, should have committed to him the dispensation of the very thing which he died to purchase and for which he intercedes?

8. Christ's love and compassion and gracious disposition are such that we may be sure he is inclined to receive all who come to him. If he should not do it, he would fail of his own undertaking, and also of his promise to the Father, and to us; and his wisdom and faithfulness will not allow of that. But he is so full of love and kindness that he is disposed to nothing but to receive and defend us, if we come to him. Christ is exceedingly ready to pity us, his arms are open to receive us, he delights to receive distressed souls that come to him, and to protect them; he would gather them as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; it is a work that he exceedingly rejoices in, because he delights in acts of love, and pity, and mercy.

I shall take occasion from what now has been said to invite those who are afraid of God's wrath, to come to Christ Jesus. You are indeed in a dreadful condition. It is dismal to have God's wrath impending over our heads, and not to know how soon it will fall upon us. And you are in some measure sensible that it is a dreadful condition, you are full of fear and trouble, and you know not where to flee for help; your mind is as it were tossed with a tempest. But how lamentable is it, that you should spend your life in such a condition, when Christ would shelter you, as a hen shelters her chickens under her wings, if you were but willing; and that you should live such a fearful, distressed life, when there is so much provision made for your safety in Christ Jesus!

How happy would you be if your hearts were but persuaded to close with Jesus Christ! Then you would be out of all danger: whatever storms and tempests were without, you might rest securely within; you might hear the rushing of the wind, and the thunder roar abroad, while you are safe in this hiding place. O be persuaded to hide yourself in Christ Jesus! What greater assurance of safety can you desire? He has undertaken to defend and save you, if you will come to him: he looks upon it as his work; he engaged in it before the world was, and he has given his faithful promise which he will not break; and if you will but make your flight there, his life shall be for yours; he will answer for you, you shall have nothing to do but rest quietly in him; you may stand still and see what the Lord will do for you. If there be any thing to suffer, the suffering is Christ's, you will have nothing to suffer; if there be any thing to be done, the doing of it is Christ's, you will have nothing to do but to stand still and behold it.

You will certainly be accepted of the Father if your soul lays hold of Jesus Christ. Christ is chosen and anointed of the Father, and sent forth for this very end, to save those that are in danger and fear; and he is greatly beloved of God, even infinitely, and he will accept of those that are in him. Justice and the law will not be against you, if you are in Christ; that threatening, "in the day that thou eatest thou shalt die," in the proper sense of it, will not touch you. The majesty and honour of God are not against you. You need not be afraid but that you shall be justified, if you come to him; there is an act of justification already past and declared for all who come to Christ by the resurrection of Christ, and as soon as ever you come, you are by that declared free. If you come to Christ it will be a sure sign that Christ loved you from all eternity, and that he died for you; and you may be sure if he died for you, he

will not lose the end of his death, for the dispensation of life is committed unto him.

You need not, therefore, continue in so dangerous a condition; there is help for you. You need not stand out in the storm so long, as there is so good a shelter near you, whose doors are open to receive you. O make haste, therefore, unto that man who is an hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest!

Let this truth also cause believers more to prize the Lord Jesus Christ. Consider that it is he, and he only, who defends you from wrath, and that he is a safe defence; your defence is a high tower; your city of refuge is impregnable. There is no rock like your rock. There is none like Christ, "the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky; the eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are everlasting arms." He in whom you trust is a buckler to all that trust in him. O prize that Saviour, who keeps your soul in safety, while thousands of others are carried away by the fury of God's anger, and are tossed with raging and burning tempests in hell! O, how much better is your case than theirs! and to whom is it owing but to the Lord Jesus Christ! Remember what was once your case, and what it is now, and prize Jesus Christ.

And let those Christians who are in doubts and fears concerning their condition, renewedly fly to Jesus Christ, who is a hiding place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest. Most Christians are at times afraid whether they shall not miscarry at last. Such doubtings are always through some want of the exercise of faith, and the best remedy for them is a renewed resort of the soul to this hiding place; the same act which at first gave comfort and peace, will give peace again. They that clearly see the sufficiency of Christ, and the safety of committing themselves to him to save them from what they fear, will rest in it that Christ will defend them; be directed therefore at such times to do as the Psalmist. Ps. lvi. 3, 4. "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. In God I will praise his word; in God I have put my trust: I will not fear what flesh can do unto me."

II. There is provision in Christ for the satisfaction and full contentment of the needy and thirsty soul. This is the sense of those words in the text, "as rivers of water in a dry place," in a dry and parched wilderness, where there is a great want of water, and where travellers are ready to be destroyed with thirst, such as was that wilderness in which the children of Israel wandered. This comparison is used elsewhere in the scriptures. Psalm lxiii. 1. "O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Ps. cxliii. 6. "I stretch forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land."

Those who travel in such a land, who wander in such a wilderness, are in extreme need of water; they are ready to perish for the want of it; and thus they have a great thirst and longing for it.

It is said that Christ is a river of water, because there is such a fulness in him, so plentiful a provision for the satisfaction of the needy and longing soul. When one is extremely thirsty, though it is not a small draught of water will satisfy him, yet when he comes to a river, he finds a fulness, there he may drink full draughts. Christ is like a river, in that he has a sufficiency not only for one thirsty soul, but by supplying him the fountain is not lessened; there is not the less afforded to those who come afterwards. A thirsty man does not sensibly lessen a river by quenching his thirst.

Christ is like a river in another respect. A river is continually flowing, there are fresh supplies of water coming from the fountain head continually, so that a man may live by it, and be supplied with water all his life. So Christ is an ever-flowing fountain; he is continually supplying his people, and the fountain is not spent. They who live upon Christ, may have fresh supplies from him to all eternity; they may have an increase of blessedness that is new, and new still, and which never will come to an end.

In illustrating this second proposition, I shall inquire,

1. What it is that the soul of every man naturally and necessarily craves.

First. The soul of every man necessarily craves happiness. This is an universal appetite of human nature, that is alike in the good and the bad; it is as universal as the very essence of the soul, because it necessarily and immediately flows from that essence. It is not only natural to all mankind, but to the angels; it is universal among all reasonable, intelligent beings, in heaven, earth, or hell, because it flows necessarily from an intelligent nature. There is no rational being, nor can there be any without a love and desire of happiness. It is impossible that there should be any creature made that should love misery, or not love happiness, since it implies a manifest contradiction; for the very notion of misery is to be in a state that nature abhors, and the notion of happiness, is to be in such a state as is most agreeable to nature.

Therefore, this craving of happiness must be insuperable, and what never can be changed; it never can be overcome, or in any way abated. Young and old love happiness alike, and good and bad, wise and unwise; though there is a great variety as to men's ideas of happiness. Some think it is to be found in one thing, and some in another; yet, as to the desire of happiness in general, there is no variety. There are particular appetites that may be restrained, and kept under, and conquered, but this general appetite for happiness never can be.

Secondly. The soul of every man craves a happiness that is equal to the capacity of his nature. The soul of man is like a vessel; the capacity of the soul is as the largeness or contents of the vessel. And therefore, if man has much pleasure and happiness, yet if the vessel is not full, the craving will not cease. Every creature is restless till it enjoys what is equal to the capacity of its nature. Thus we may observe in the brutes; when they have that which is suitable to their nature, and proportional to their capacity, they are contented. Man is of such a nature, that he is capable of an exceedingly great degree of happiness; he is made of a vastly higher nature than the brutes, and therefore he must have vastly higher happiness to satisfy. The pleasures of the outward senses which content the beasts, will not content man. He has other faculties of a higher nature that stand in need of something to fill them; if the sense be satiated, yet if the faculties of the soul are not filled, man will be in a craving restless state.

It is more especially by reason of the faculty of understanding that the soul is capable of so great a happiness, and desires so much. The understanding is an exceedingly extensive faculty; it extends itself beyond the limits of earth, beyond the limits of the creation. As we are capable of understanding immensely more than we do understand, who can tell how far the understanding of men is capable of stretching itself? and as the understanding enlarges, the desire will enlarge with it. It must therefore be an incomprehensible object that must satisfy the soul; it will never be contented with that, and that only, to which it can see an end, it will never be satisfied with that happiness to which it can find a bottom.

A man may seem to take contentment for a little while in a finite object, but after he has had a little experience, he finds that he wants something besides. This is very apparent from the experience of this restless craving world. Every one is inquiring, Who will show us any good?

2. Men in their fallen state, are in very great want of this happiness. They were once in the enjoyment of it, but mankind are sunk to a very low estate; we are naturally poor, destitute creatures. We came naked into the world, and our souls as well as our bodies are in a wretched, miserable condition; we are so far from having food to eat suitable to our nature, that we are greedy after the husks which the swine do eat.

The poverty of man in a natural condition, appears in his discontented, craving spirit; it shows that the soul is very empty, when, like the horse-leech, it cries, "give, give, and saith not, it is enough." We are naturally like the Prodigal, for we once were rich, but we departed from our father's house, and have

squandered away our wealth, and are become poor, hungry, famishing wretches.

Men in a natural condition may find something to gratify their senses, but there is nothing to feed the soul; that more noble and more essential part perishes for lack of food. They may fare sumptuously every day, they may pamper their bodies, but the soul cannot be fed from a sumptuous table; they may drink wine in bowls, yet the spiritual part is not refreshed. The superior faculties want to be supplied as well as the inferior. True poverty and true misery consist in the want of those things of which our spiritual part stands in need.

3. Those sinners who are thoroughly awakened, are sensible of their great want. Multitudes of men are not sensible of their miserable, needy condition. There are many who are thus poor, and think themselves rich, and increased in goods. Indeed there are no natural men that have true contentment: they are all restless, and crying, "who will show us any good?" but multitudes are not sensible how exceedingly necessitous is their condition. But the thoroughly awakened soul sees that he is very far from true happiness, that those things which he possesses will never make him happy; that for all his outward possessions he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. He becomes sensible of the short continuance and uncertainty of those things, and their insufficiency to satisfy a troubled conscience. He wants something else to give him peace and ease. If you would tell him that he might have a kingdom, it would not quiet him; he desires to have his sins pardoned, and to be at peace with his Judge. He is poor, and he becomes as a beggar; he comes and cries for help. He does not thirst, because he as yet sees where true happiness is to be found, but because he sees that he has it not, and cannot find it. He is without comfort, and does not know where to find it, but he longs for it. O, what would he not give, if he could find some satisfying peace and comfort!

Such are those hungry, thirsty souls that Christ so often invites to come to him. Isai. lv. 1, 2. "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink; and he that is athirst, let him come and take of the water of life freely."

4. There is in Christ Jesus provision for the full satisfaction and contentment of such as these.

First. The excellency of Christ is such, that the discovery of it is exceedingly contenting and satisfying to the soul. The inquiry of the soul is after that which is most excellent. The carnal soul imagines that earthly things are excellent; one thinks riches most excellent, another has the highest esteem of honour, and to another carnal pleasure appears the most excellent; but the soul cannot find contentment in any of these things, because it soon finds an end to their excellency.

Worldly men imagine, that there is true excellency and true happiness in those things which they are pursuing. They think that if they could but obtain them, they should be happy; and when they obtain them, and cannot find happiness, they look for happiness in something else, and are still upon the pursuit.

But Christ Jesus has true excellency, and so great excellency, that when they come to see it they look no further, but the mind rests there. It sees a transcendent glory and an ineffable sweetness in him; it sees that till now it has been pursuing shadows, but that now it has found the substance; that before it had been seeking happiness in the stream, but that now it has found the ocean. The excellency of Christ is an object adequate to the natural cravings of the soul, and is sufficient to fill the capacity. It is an infinite excellency, such an one as the mind desires, in which it can find no bounds; and the more the mind is used to it, the more excellent it appears. Every new discovery makes this beauty appear more ravishing, and the mind sees no end; here is room enough for the mind to go deeper and deeper, and never come to the bottom. The soul is exceedingly ravished when it first looks on this beauty, and it is never weary of it. The mind never has any satiety, but Christ's excellency is always fresh and new, and tends as much to delight, after it has been seen a thousand or ten thousand years, as when it was seen the first moment. The excellency of Christ is an object suited to the superior faculties of man, it is suited to entertain the faculty of reason and understanding, and there is nothing so worthy about which the understanding can be employed as this excellency; no other object is so great, noble, and exalted.

This excellency of Jesus Christ is the suitable food of the rational soul. The soul that comes to Christ, feeds upon this, and lives upon it; it is that bread which came down from heaven, of which he that eats shall not die; it is angels' food; it is that wine and milk that is given without money, and without price. This is that fatness in which the believing soul delights itself; here the longing soul may be satified, and the hungry soul may be filled with goodness. The delight and contentment that is to be found here, passeth understanding, and is unspeakable and full of glory. It is impossible for those who have tasted of this fountain, and

know the sweetness of it, ever to forsake it. The soul has found the river of water of life, and it desires no other drink; it has found the tree of life, and it desires no other fruit.

Secondly. The manifestation of the love of Christ gives the soul abundant contentment. This love of Christ is exceedingly sweet and satisfying, it is better than life, because it is the love of a person of such dignity and excellency. The sweetness of his love depends very much upon the greatness of his excellency; so much the more lovely the person, so much the more desirable is his love. How sweet must the love of that person be, who is the eternal Son of God, who is of equal dignity with the Father! How great a happiness must it be to be the object of the love of him who is the Creator of the world, and by whom all things consist, and who is exalted at God's right hand, and made head over principalities and powers in heavenly places, who has all things put under his feet, and is King of kings and Lord of lords, and is the brightness of the Father's glory! Surely to be beloved by him, is enough to satisfy the soul of a worm of the dust.

This love of Christ is also exceedingly sweet and satisfying from the greatness of it; it is a dying love; such love as never was before seen, and such as no other can parallel. There have been instances of very great love between one earthly friend and another: there was a surpassing love between David and Jonathan. But there never was any such love as Christ has towards believers. The satisfying nature of this love arises also from the sweet fruits of it. Those precious benefits that Christ bestows upon his people, and those precious promises which he has given them, are the fruit of this love; joy and hope are the constant streams that flow from this fountain, from the love of Christ.

Thirdly. There is provision for the satisfaction and contentment of the thirsty longing soul in Christ, as he is the way to the Father; not only from the fulness of excellency and grace which he has in his own person, but as by him we may come to God, may be reconciled to him, and may be made happy in his favour and love.

The poverty and want of the soul in its natural state consist in its being separated from God, for God is the riches and the happiness of the creature. But we naturally are alienated from God; and God is alienated from us, our Maker is not at peace with us. But in Christ there is a way for a free communication between God and us; for us to come to God, and for God to communicate himself to us by his Spirit. John xiv. 6. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Ephes. ii. 13. 18, 19. "But now in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far

off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

Christ by being thus the way to the Father, is the way to true happiness and contentment. John x. 9. "I am the door: by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture."

Hence I would take occasion to invite needy, thirty souls to come to Jesus. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." You that have not yet come to Christ, are in a poor necessitous condition; you are in a parched wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land. And if you are thoroughly awakened, you are sensible that you are in distress and ready to faint for want of something to satisfy your souls. Come to him who is "as rivers of water in a dry place." There are plenty and fulness in him; he is like a river that is always flowing, you may live by it for ever, and never be in want. Come to him who has such excellency as is sufficient to give full contentment to your soul, who is a person of transcendent glory, and ineffable beauty, where you may entertain the view of your soul for ever without weariness, and without being cloyed. Accept of the offered love of him who is the only begotten Son of God, and his elect, is whom his soul delighteth. Through Christ, come to God the Father, from whom you have departed by sin. He is the way, the truth, and the life; he is the door by which, if any man enters, he shall be saved.

III. There are quiet rest and sweet refreshment in Christ Jesus, for those that are weary. He is "as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land."

The comparison that is used in the text is very beautiful and very significative. The dry, barren, and scorched wilderness of Arabia is a very lively representation of the misery, that men have brought upon themselves by sin. It is destitute of any inhabitants but lions and tigers and fiery serpents; it is barren and parched, and without any river or spring; it is a land of drought, wherein there is seldom any rain, a land exceedingly hot and uncomfortable. The scorching sunbeams that are ready to consume the spirits of travellers, are a fit representation of terror of conscience, and the inward sense of God's displeasure.

And there being no other shade in which travellers may rest, but only here and there that of a great rock, it is a fit representation of Jesus Christ, who came to redeem us from our misery. Christ is often compared to a rock, because he is a

sure foundation to builders, and because he is a sure bulwark and defence. They who dwell upon the top of a rock, dwell in a most defensible place; we read of those whose habitation is the munitions of rocks. He may also be compared to a rock, as he is everlasting and unchangeable. A great rock remains steadfast, unmoved, and unbroken by winds and storms from age to age; and therefore God chose a rock to be an emblem of Christ in the wilderness, when he caused water to issue forth for the children of Israel; and the shadow of a great rock is a most fit representation of the refreshment given to weary souls by Jesus Christ.

1. There is quiet rest and full refreshment in Christ for sinners that are weary and heavy laden with sin. Sin is the most evil and odious thing, as well as the most mischievous and fatal; it is the most mortal poison; it, above all things, hazards life, and endangers the soul, exposes to the loss of all happiness, and to the suffering of all misery, and brings the wrath of God. All men have this dreadful evil hanging about them, and cleaving fast to the soul, and ruling over it, and keeping it in possession, and under absolute command: it hangs like a viper to the heart, or rather holds it as a lion does his prey.

But yet there are multitudes, who are not sensible of their misery. They are in such a sleep that they are not very unquiet in this condition, it is not very burthensome to them, they are so sottish that they do not know what is their state, and what is like to become of them. But there are others who have their sense so far restored to them that they feel the pain, and see the approaching destruction, and sin lies like a heavy load upon their hearts; it is a load that lies upon them day and night, they cannot lay it down to rest themselves, but it continually oppresses them. It is bound fast unto them, and is ready to sink them down; it is a continual labour of heart, to support itself under this burden. Thus we read of them "that labour, and are heavy laden."

Or rather, it is like the scorching heat in a dry wilderness, where the sun beats and burns all the day long; where they have nothing to defend them; where they can find no shade to refresh themselves. If they lay themselves down to rest, it is like lying down in the hot sands, where there is nothing to keep off the heat.

Here it may be proper to inquire who are weary and heavy laden with sin; and in what sense a sinner may be weary and burdened with sin. Sinners are not wearied with sin from any dislike to it, or dislike of it. There is no sinner that is burdened with sin in the sense in which a godly man carries his indwelling sin, as his daily and greatest burden, because

he loathes it, and longs to get rid of it; he would fain be at a great distance from it, and have nothing more to do with it; he is ready to cry out as Paul did, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" The unregenerate man has nothing of this nature, for sin is yet his delight, he dearly loves it. If he be under convictions, his love to sin in general is not mortified, he loves it as well as ever, he hides it still as a sweet morsel under his tongue.

But there is a difference between being weary and burdened with sin, and being weary of sin. Awakened sinners are weary with sin, but not properly weary of it.

Therefore, they are only weary of the guilt of sin, the guilt that cleaves to their consciences is that great burden. God has put the sense of feeling into their consciences, that were before as seared flesh, and it is guilt that pains them. The filthiness of sin and its evil nature, as it is an offence to a holy, gracious, and glorious God, is not a burden to them. But it is the connection between sin and punishment, between sin and God's wrath, that makes it a burden. Their consciences are heavy laden with guilt, which is an obligation to punishment; they see the threatening and curse of the law joined to their sins, and see that the justice of God and his vengeance are against them. They are burdened with their sins, not because there is any odiousness in them, but because there is hell in them. This is the sting of sin, whereby it stings the conscience, and distresses and wearies the soul.

The guilt of such and such great sins is upon the soul, and the man sees no way to get rid of it, but he has wearisome days and wearisome nights; it makes him ready sometimes to say as the Psalmist did, "O that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."

But when sinners come to Christ, he takes away that which was their burden, or their sin and guilt, that which was so heavy upon their hearts, that so distressed their minds.

First. He takes away the guilt of sin, from which the soul before saw no way how it was possible to be freed, and which, if it was not removed, led to eternal destruction. When the sinner comes to Christ, it is all at once taken away, and the soul is left free, it is lightened of its burden, it is delivered from its bondage, and is like a bird escaped from the snare of the fowler. The soul sees in Christ a way to peace with God, and a way by which the law may be answered, and justice satisfied, and yet he may escape; a wonderful way indeed, but yet a certain and a glorious one. And what rest does it give to the weary soul to see itself thus delivered, that the foundation of its anxieties and fears is wholly re-

moved, and that God's wrath ceases, that it is brought into a state of peace with God, and that there is no more occasion to fear hell, but that it is for ever safe!

How refreshing is it to the soul to be at once thus delivered of that which was so much its trouble and terror, and to be eased of that which was so much its burden! This is like coming to a cool shade after one has been travelling in a dry and hot wilderness, and almost fainting under the scorching heat.

And then Christ also takes away sin itself, and mortifies that root of bitterness which is the cause of all the inward tumults and disquietudes that are in the mind, that make it like the troubled sea that cannot rest, and leave it all calm. When guilt is taken away and sin is mortified, then the foundation of fear, and trouble, and pain is removed, and the soul is left in peace and serenity.

Secondly. Christ puts strength and a principle of new life into the weary soul that comes to him. The sinner, before he comes to Christ, is as a sick man that is weakened and brought low, and whose nature is consumed by some strong distemper; he is full of pain, and so weak that he cannot walk nor stand. Therefore, Christ is compared to a physician. "But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick." When he comes and speaks the word, he puts a principle of life into him that was before as dead; he gives a principle of spiritual life and the beginning of eternal life; he invigorates the mind with a communication of his own life and strength, and renews the nature and creates it again, and makes the man to be a new creature.

So that the fainting, sinking spirits are now revived, and this principle of spiritual life is a continual spring of refreshment, like a well of living water. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." Christ gives his Spirit that calms the mind, and is like a refreshing breeze of wind. He gives that strength whereby he lifts up the hands that hang down, and strengthens the feeble knees.

Thirdly. Christ gives to those who come to him such comfort and pleasure as are enough to make them forget all their former labour and travail. A little of true peace, a little of the joys of the manifested love of Christ, and a little of the true and holy hope of eternal life, are enough to compensate for all that toil and weariness, and to erase the remembrance of it from the mind. That peace which results from true faith, passes understanding, and that joy is joy unspeakable. There is something peculiarly sweet and refreshing in this joy, that is not in other joys; and what can

more effectually support the mind, or give a more rational ground of rejoicing, than a prospect of eternal glory in the enjoyment of God from God's own promise in Christ? If we come to Christ, we may not only be refreshed by resting in his shadow, but by eating his fruit: these things are the fruits of this tree. "I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

Before proceeding to the next particular of this proposition, I would apply myself to those that are weary; to move them, to repose themselves under Christ's shadow.

The great trouble of such a state, one would think, should be a motive to you to accept of an offer of relief, and remedy. You are weary, and doubtless would be glad to be at rest; but here you are to consider,

1st. That there is no remedy but in Jesus Christ; there is nothing else will give you true quietness. If you could fly into heaven, you would not find it there; if you should take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, in some solitary place in the wilderness, you could not fly from your burden. So that if you do not come to Christ, you must either continue still weary and burdened, or which is worse, you must return to your old dead sleep, to a state of stupidity; and not only so, but you must be everlastingly wearied with God's wrath.

2d. Consider that Christ is a remedy at hand. You need not wish for the wings of a dove that you may fly afar off, and be at rest, but Christ is nigh at hand, if you were but sensible of it. Romans x. 6, 7, 8. "But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise, Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven (that is, to bring Christ down from above,) or who shall descend into the deep: (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart; that is, the word of faith which we preach." There is no need of doing any great work to come at this rest; the way is plain to it; it is but going to it, it is but sitting down under Christ's shadow. Christ requires no money to purchase rest of him, he calls to us to come freely, and for nothing. If we are poor and have no money, we may come. Christ sent out his servants to invite the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. Christ does not want to be hired to accept of you, and to give you rest. It is his work as Mediator to give rest to the weary, it is the work that he was anointed for, and in which he delights. "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound."

3d. Christ is not only a remedy for your weariness and trouble, but he will give you an abundance of the contrary, joy and delight. They who come to Christ, do not only come to a resting place after they have been wandering in a wilderness, but they come to a banqueting-house where they may rest, and where they may feast. They may cease from their former troubles and toils, and they may enter upon a course of delights and spiritual joys.

Christ not only delivers from fears of hell and of wrath, but he gives hopes of heaven, and the enjoyment of God's love. He delivers from inward tumults and inward pain, from that guilt of conscience, which is as a worm gnawing within, and he gives delight and inward glory. He brings us out of a wilderness of pits, and drought, and fiery flying serpents; and he brings us into a pleasant land, a land flowing with milk and honey. He delivers us out of prison, and lifts us off from the dunghill, and he sets us among princes, and causes us to inherit the throne of glory. Wherefore, if any one is weary, if any is in prison, if any one is in captivity, if any one is in the wilderness, let him come to the blessed Jesus, who is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Delay not, arise and come away.

2. There are quiet rest and sweet refreshment in Christ for God's people that are weary.

The saints themselves, while they remain in this imperfect state, and have so much remains of sin in their hearts, are liable still to many troubles and sorrows, and much weariness, and have often need to resort anew unto Jesus Christ for rest. I shall mention three cases wherein Christ is a sufficient remedy.

First. There is rest and sweet refreshment in Christ for those that are wearied with persecutions. It has been the lot of God's church in this world for the most part to be persecuted. It has had now and then some lucid intervals of peace and outward prosperity, but generally it has been otherwise. This has accorded with the first prophecy concerning Christ; "I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed." Those two seeds have been at enmity ever since the time of Abel. Satan has borne great malice against the church of God, and so have those that are his seed. And oftentimes God's people have been persecuted to an extreme degree, have been put to the most exquisite torments that wit or art could devise, and thousands of them have been tormented to death.

But even in such a case there are rest and refreshment to be found in Christ Jesus. When their cruel enemies have given them no rest in this world; when, as oftentimes, has been the case, they could not flee, nor in any way avoid the rage of their adversaries, but many of them have been tormented gradually from day

to day, that their torments might be lengthened; still rest has been found even then in Christ. It has been often found by experience; the martyrs have often showed plainly that the peace and calm of their minds were undisturbed in the midst of the greatest bodily torment, and have sometimes rejoiced and sung praises upon the rack and in the fire. If Christ is pleased to send forth his Spirit to manifest his love, and speaks friendly to the soul, it will support it even in the greatest outward torment that man can inflict. Christ is the joy of the soul, and if the soul be but rejoiced and filled with divine light, such joy no man can take away; whatever outward misery there be, the spirit will sustain it.

Secondly. There is in Christ rest for God's people, when exercised with afflictions. If a person labour under great bodily weakness, or under some disease that causes frequent and strong pains, such things will tire out so feeble a creature as man. It may to such an one be a comfort and an effectual support to think, that he has a Mediator, who knows by experience what pain is; who by his pain has purchased eternal ease and pleasure for him; and who will make his brief sufferings to work out a far more exceeding delight, to be bestowed when he shall rest from his labours and sorrows.

If a person be brought into great straits as to outward subsistence, and poverty brings abundance of difficulties and extremities; yet it may be a supporting, refreshing consideration to such an one to think, that he has a compassionate Saviour, who when upon earth, was so poor that he had not where to lay his head; and who became poor to make him rich, and purchased for him durable riches, and will make his poverty work out an exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

If God in his providence calls his people to mourn over lost relations, and if he repeats his stroke and takes away one after another of those that were dear to him; it is a supporting, refreshing consideration to think, that Christ has declared that he will be in stead of all relations unto those who trust in him. They are as his mother, and sister and brother; he has taken them into a very near relation to himself: and in every other afflictive providence, it is a great comfort to a believing soul to think that he has an intercessor with God, that by him he can have access with confidence to the throne of Grace, and that in Christ we have so many great and precious promises, that all things shall work together for good, and shall issue in eternal blessedness. God's people, whenever they are scorched by afflictions as by hot sun-beams, may resort to him, who is as a shadow of a great rock, and be effectually sheltered, and sweetly refreshed.

Thirdly. There is in Christ quiet rest and sweet refreshment for God's people, when wearied with the buffetings of Satan. The devil, that malicious enemy of God and man, does whatever lies in his power to darken and hinder, and tempt God's people, and render their lives uncomfortable. Often he raises needless and groundless scruples, and casts in doubts, and fills the mind with such fear as is tormenting, and tends to hinder them exceedingly in the Christian course; and he often raises mists and clouds of darkness, and stirs up corruption, and thereby fills the mind with concern and anguish, and sometimes wearies out the soul. So that they may say as the Psalmist; "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and roaring a lion."

In such a case if the soul flies to Jesus Christ, they may find rest in him, for he came into the world to destroy Satan, and to rescue souls out of his hands. And he has all things put under his feet, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth, or things in hell, and therefore he can restrain Satan when he pleases. And that he is doubtless ready enough to pity us under such temptations, we may be assured, for he has been tempted and buffeted by Satan as well as we. He is able to succour those that are tempted, and he has promised that he will subdue Satan under his people's feet. Let God's people therefore, when they are exercised with any of those kinds of weariness, make their resort unto Jesus Christ for refuge and rest.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We may here see great reason to admire the goodness and grace of God to us in our low estate, that he has so provided for our help and relief. We are by our own sin against God, plunged into all sort of evil, and God has provided a remedy for us against every sort of evil, he has left us helpless in no calamity. We by our sin have exposed ourselves to wrath, to a vindictive justice; but God has done very great things that we might be saved from that wrath; he has been at infinite cost that the law might be answered without our suffering. We by our sins have exposed ourselves to terror of conscience, in expectation of the dreadful storm of God's wrath; but God has provided for us an hiding place from the storm, he bids us enter into his chambers, and hide ourselves from indignation. We by sin have made ourselves poor, needy creatures; but God has provided for us gold tried in the fire. We by sin, have made ourselves naked; and when he passed by, he took notice of our want, and has provided us white raiment that we may be

clothed. We have made ourselves blind, and God in mercy to us has provided eye-salve, that we may see. We have deprived ourselves of all spiritual food; we are like the Prodigal son that perished with hunger, and would gladly have filled his belly with husks. God has taken notice of this our condition, and has provided for us a feast of fat things, and has sent forth his servants to invite the poor, the maimed, the halt, and the blind. We, by sin, have brought ourselves into a dry and thirsty wilderness; but God was merciful, and took notice of our condition, and has provided for us rivers of water, water out of the rock. We, by sin, have brought upon ourselves a miserable slavery and bondage; God has made provision for our liberty. We have exposed ourselves to weariness; God has provided a resting place for us. We, by sin, have exposed ourselves to many outward troubles and afflictions; God has pitied us, and in Christ has provided true comfort for us. We have exposed ourselves to our grand enemy, even Satan, to be tempted and buffeted by him; God has pitied and has provided for us a Saviour and captain of salvation, who has overcome Satan, and is able to deliver us. Thus God has in Christ provided sufficiently for our help in all kinds of evils.

How ought we to bless God for this abundant provision he has made for us, poor and sinful as we were, who were so undeserving and so ungrateful. He made no such provision for the fallen angels, who are left without remedy in all the woes and miseries into which they are plunged.

2. We should admire the love of Christ to men, that he has thus given himself to be the remedy for all their evil, and a fountain of all good. Christ has given himself to us, to be all things to us that we need. We want clothing, and Christ does not only give us clothing, but he gives himself to be our clothing, that we might put him on. Gal. iii. 27. "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ." Rom. xiii. 14. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."

We want food, and Christ has given himself to be our food; he has given his own flesh to be our meat, and his blood to be our drink, to nourish our soul. Thus Christ tells us that he is the bread which came down from heaven, and the bread of life. "I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." In order to our eating of his flesh, it was necessary that he should be slain, as the sacrifices must be slain before they could be eaten; and such was

Christ's love to us, that he consented to be slain, he went as a sheep to the slaughter, that he might give us his flesh to be food for our poor, famishing souls.

We are in need of a habitation; we by sin have, as it were, turned ourselves out of house and home; Christ has given himself to be the habitation of his people. Ps. xc. 1. "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations." It is promised to God's people that they should dwell in the temple of God for ever, and should go no more out; and we are told that Christ is the temple of the new Jerusalem.

Christ gives himself to his people to be all things to them that they need, and all things that make for their happiness. Colos. iii. 11. "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all." And that he might be so, he has refused nothing that is needful to prepare him to be so. When it was needful that he should be incarnate, he refused it not, but became man, and appeared in the form of a servant. When it was needful that he should be slain, he refused it not, but gave himself for us, and gave himself to us upon the cross.

Here is love for us to admire, for us to praise, and for us to rejoice in, with joy that is full of glory for ever.

SERMON XIII.

1 Peter ii. 9.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.

The apostle in the preceding verses speaks of the great difference between Christians and unbelievers, on account of their diverse and opposite relations to Jesus Christ. The former have Christ for their foundation, they come to him as to a living stone, a stone chosen of God, and precious; and they also as living stones are built up a spiritual house. The Christian church is the temple of God, and particular believers are the stones of which that temple is built. The stones of Solomon's temple, which were so curiously polished and well fitted for their places in that building, were a type of believers. And Christ is the foundation of this building, or the chief corner stone. On the contrary, to the latter, to unbelievers, Christ instead of being a foundation on which they rest and depend, is a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; instead of being a foundation to support them and keep them from falling, he is an occasion of their stumbling and falling.

And again, to believers Christ is a precious stone: "Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious." But to unbelievers he is a stone that is disallowed, and rejected, and set at nought. They set light by him, as by the stones of the street, they make no account of him, they disallow him; when they come to build, they cast this stone away as being of no use, not fit for a foundation, not fit for a place in their building. In the eighth verse the apostle tells the Christians to whom he writes, that those unbelievers who thus reject Christ, and to whom he is a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence, were appointed to this. "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed." It was appointed that they should stumble at the word, that Christ should be an occasion not of their salvation, but of their deeper damnation. And then in our

text, he puts the Christians in mind how far otherwise God had dealt with them, than with those reprobates. They were a chosen generation. God had rejected the others in his eternal counsels; but themselves he had chosen from eternity. They were a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.

As God distinguished the people of Israel of old from all other nations, so he distinguishes true Christians. It is probable, the apostle had in his mind some expressions that are used in the old testament, concerning the people of Israel. Christians are said here to be a chosen generation, according to what was said of Israel of old. Deut. x. 15. "Only the Lord thy God had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day." Christians are here said to be a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, agreeably to what was said of old of Israel. Exod. xix. 5, 6. "Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people, for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

But there is something further said here of Christians than there of Israel. There, it is promised to Israel that, if they obey, they shall be *a kingdom of priests;* but here, Christians are said to be *a priesthood of kings*, or a royal priesthood. They are a priesthood, and they are also kings.

I propose to insist distinctly upon the several propositions contained in the words of the text.

I. True Christians are *a Chosen Generation.* Two things are here implied.

1. That true Christians are chosen by God from the rest of the world, to be his.

2. That God's people are of a peculiar descent and pedigree, different from all the world besides.

1. True Christians are chosen by God from the rest of the world.

God does not utterly cast off the world of mankind. Though they are fallen and corrupted, and there is a curse brought upon the world, yet God entertained a design of appropriating a certain number to himself. Indeed all men and all creatures are his, as well since as before the fall; whether they are elected or not, they are his. God does not lose his right to them by the fall, neither does he lose his power to dispose of them; they are still in his hands. Neither does he lose his end in creating them. God hath made all things for himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. It possibly was Satan's design, in endeavouring the fall of man, to cause that God should lose the creature that he had made,

by getting him away from God into his own possession, and to frustrate God of his end in creating man; but this Satan has not obtained.

But yet in a sense the wicked may be said not to belong to God. God doth not own them; he hath rejected them and cast them away; they are not God's portion, they are Satan's portion; God hath left them, and they are lost. When man fell, God left and cast off the bulk of mankind; but he was pleased, notwithstanding the universal fall, to choose out a number of them to be his, whom he would still appropriate to himself. Though the world is a fallen world, yet it was the will of God still to have a portion in it, and therefore he chose out some and set them apart for himself. Ps. iv. 3. "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto him." God's portion is his people, and Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. Deut. xxxii. 9. Those who are God's enemies, and to whom he is an enemy, are still his. But those who are his friends, his children, his jewels, that compose his treasure, are his in a very different manner. God has chosen the godly out of the rest of the world to be nearly related to him, to stand in the relation of children, to have a property in him, that they might not only be his people, but that he might be their God; he has chosen these to bestow himself upon them. He hath chosen them from among others to be gracious to them, to show them his favour; he has chosen them to enjoy him, to see his glory, and to dwell with him for ever. He hath chosen them as his treasure, as a man chooses out gems from a heap of stones, with this difference, the man finds gems very different from other stones, and therefore chooses. But God chooses them, and therefore they become gems, and very different from others. Mal. iii. 17. "And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Ps. cxxxv. 4. "For the Lord hath chosen Jacob unto himself, and Israel for his peculiar treasure." God hath chosen them for a most noble and excellent use, and therefore they are called vessels unto honour, and elect vessels. God has different uses for different men. Some are destined to a baser use, and are vessels unto dishonour; others are chosen for the most noble use, for serving and glorifying God, and that God may show the glory of divine grace upon them.

Several things may here be observed concerning this election of God, whereby he chooses truly godly persons.

First. This election supposes that the persons chosen are found among others. The word election denotes this, it signifies *a choosing out*. The elect are favoured by electing grace among the rest of mankind, with whom they are found mixed together as the tares

and the wheat. They are found among them in the same sinfulness, and in the same misery, and are alike partakers of original corruption. They are among them in being destitute of any thing in them that is good in enmity against God, in being in bondage to Satan, in condemnation to eternal destruction, and in being without righteousness. So that there is no distinction between them prior to that which the election makes, there is no respect wherein the elect are not among the common multitude of mankind. 1 Cor. iv. 7. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?" 1 Cor. vi. 11. "And such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." And, therefore,

Secondly. No foreseen excellency in the elected is the motive that influences God to choose them. Election is only from his good pleasure. God's election being the first thing that causes any distinction, there can be no distinction already existing, the foresight of which influences God to choose them. It is not the seeing of any amiableness in them above others, that causes God to choose them rather than the rest. God does not choose men, because they are excellent; but he makes them excellent, and because he has chosen them. It is not because God considers them as holy, that he chooses them; but he chooses them, that they might be holy. Eph. i. 4, 5. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." God does not choose them, from the foresight of any respect they will have towards him more than others. God does not choose men and set his care upon them because they love him, for he hath first loved us. 1 John. iv. 10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins;" verse 19. "We love him, because he first loved us."

It is not from any foresight of good works, that men do before or after conversion; but on the contrary, men do good works, because God hath chosen them. John xv. 16. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain; that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Nor did God choose men, because he foresaw that they would believe and come to Christ. Faith is the consequence of election, and not the cause of it. Acts

xiii. 48. "And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life, believed." It is because God hath chosen men, that he calls them to Christ, and causes them to come to him. To suppose that election is from the foresight of faith, is to place calling before election, which is contrary to the order in which the scripture represents things. Rom. viii. 30. "Moreover, whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified." It is not from the foresight of any, either moral or natural qualifications, that God chooses men, nor because he sees that some men are of a more amiable make, and better natural temper, or genius, nor because he foresees that some men will have better abilities, and will have more wisdom than others, and so will be able to do more service for God than others; nor because he foresees that they will be great and rich, and so possessed of greater advantages to serve him. 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world, to confound the things which are mighty; and the base things of the world, and things despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." Nor is it from any foresight of men's endeavours after conversion, because he sees that some whom he chooses will do much more than others to obtain heaven; but God chooses them, and therefore awakens them, and prompts them to strive for conversion. Rom. ix. 16. "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." Election in scripture is every where referred to God's own good pleasure. Matth. xi. 26. "Even so Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight." 2 Tim. i. 9. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began."

Thirdly. True Christians are chosen of God from all eternity; not only before they were born, but before the world was created. They were foreknown of God, and chosen by him out of the world. Eph. i. 4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love." 2 Tim. i. 9. "According to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began."

Fourthly. God in election set his love upon those whom he elected. Rom. ix. 13. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Jer. xxxi. 3. "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love:

therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." 1 John iv. 19. "We love him, because he first loved us." A God of infinite goodness and benevolence loves those that have no excellency to move or attract it: the love of men is consequent upon some loveliness in the object, but the love of God is antecedent to, and the cause of it. Believers were from all eternity beloved both by the Father and the Son. The eternal love of the Father appears in that he from all eternity contrived a way for their salvation, and chose Jesus Christ to be their Redeemer, and laid help upon him. It is a fruit of this electing love that God sent his Son into the world to die, it was to redeem those whom he so loved. 1 John iv. 10. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It is a fruit of the eternal, electing love of Jesus Christ, that he was willing to come into the world, and die for sinners, and that he actually came and died. Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And so conversion, and glorification, and all that is done for a believer from the first to the last, is a fruit of electing love.

Fifthly. This electing love of God is singly of every particular person. Some deny a particular election, and say that there is no other election than a general determination, that all that believe and obey shall be saved. Some also own no more than an absolute election of nations. But God did from all eternity, singly and distinctly choose, and set his love upon every particular person, that ever believes, as is evident by Gal. ii. 20. "Who loved me and gave himself for me." God set his love from eternity upon this and that person, as particularly as if there were no other chosen than he; and therefore it is represented, as though they were mentioned by name, that their names are written in the book of life. Luke x. 20. "Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." Rev. xiii. 8. "And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Sixthly. In election, believers were from all eternity given to Jesus Christ. As believers were chosen from all eternity, so Christ was from eternity chosen and appointed to be their Redeemer, and he undertook the work of redeeming them. There was a covenant respecting it between the Father and Son. Christ, as we have already observed, loved them before the creation of the world; and then he had their names, as it were, written in a book,

and therefore the book of life is called the Lamb's book. Rev. xxi. 27. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life." And he bears their names upon his heart as the high priest of old did the names of the tribes of the children of Israel on his breast-plate. Christ often calls the elect those whom God had given him. John xvii. 2. "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." In the 9th verse, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." In the 11th verse, "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are."

This part of the subject may suggest to us the following Reflections.

First. God's thus electing a certain, definite number from among fallen men from all eternity, is a manifestation of his glory. It shows the glory of the divine sovereignty. God hereby declares himself the absolute disposer of the creature; he shows us how far his sovereignty and dominion extend, in eternally choosing some and passing by others, and leaving them to perish. God here appears in a majesty that is unparalleled. Those who can see no glory of dominion in this act, have not attained to right apprehensions of God, and never have been made sensible of his glorious greatness. And here is especially shown the glory of divine grace, in God's having chosen his people to blessedness and glory long before they are born; in his choosing them out of the mass of mankind, from whom they were not distinguished, and in his love to them being prior to all that they have or do, being uninfluenced by any excellency of theirs, by the light of any labours or endeavours of theirs, or any respect of theirs towards him.

The Doctrine of election shows, that if those who are converted have earnestly sought grace and holiness, and in that way have obtained it, their obtaining it is not owing to their endeavours, but that it was the grace and mercy of God that caused them earnestly to seek conversion, that they might obtain it. It shows also that faith itself is the gift of God, and that the saints' persevering in a way of holiness unto glory, is also the fruit of electing love. Believers' love to God is the fruit of God's love to them, and the giving of Christ, the preaching of the gospel, the appointing of ordinances, are all fruits of the grace of election. All the grace that is shown to any of mankind, either in this

world, or in the world to come, is comprised in the electing love of God.

Secondly. If believers are the chosen of God, here is a great argument for their love and gratitude towards him. The consideration of the miserable condition in which God found you, and in which he left others, should move your hearts. How wonderful that God should take such thought of a poor worm from all eternity! God might have left you as well as many others, but it pleased the Lord to set his love upon you. What cause have you for love and thankfulness, that God should make choice of you, and set you apart for himself, rather than so many thousands of others!

God hath chosen you not merely to be his subjects and servants, but to be his children, to be his peculiar treasure; he has chosen you to be blessed for ever in the enjoyment of himself, and to dwell with him in his glory. He has given you from all eternity to his Son, to be united unto him, to become the spouse of Christ. He has chosen you that you might be holy and without blame, that you might have your filth taken away, and that you might have the image of God put upon you, and that your soul might be adorned, to be the bride of his glorious and dear Son. What cause for love is here!

Thirdly. If believers are a chosen generation, let all labour earnestly to make their election sure. If true Christians are chosen of God, this should induce all earnestly to inquire whether they are true Christians. 2 Peter i. 5, 6. 7. "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity."

2. True Christians are a distinct race of men; they are of a peculiar descent or pedigree, different from the rest of the world. This is implied in their being called a generation. There are three significations of the word generation in the scriptures. Sometimes it means, as is its meaning in common use, *a class of persons among a people, or in the world, that are born together, or so nearly together, that the time of their being in the different stages of the age of man is the same.* They shall be young persons, middle aged, and old together; or they shall be together upon the stage of action. All that are together upon the face of the earth, or the stage of action, are very often accounted as one generation. Thus when God threatened that not one of the Israelites of that generation should see the good land, it is meant, all from twenty years old and upwards.

A second meaning is, *those who are born of a common progenitor.*

A third meaning of the word in scripture, is, *a certain race of mankind, whose generation and birth agree, not as to time*, but *as to descent and pedigree*, or *as to those persons from whom they originally proceeded.* So it is to be understood, Matth. i. 1. "This is the book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;" that is, this is the book that gives an account of his pedigree. And this meaning, viz. those who are of the same race and descent, must be given to the word in the text. The righteous are often spoken of in scripture, as being a distinct generation. Ps. xiv. 5. "There were they in great fear: for God is in the generation of the righteous." Ps. xxiv. 6. "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob." Ps. lxxiii. 15. "If I say, I will speak thus: behold, I should offend against the generation of thy children."

That the godly are a distinct race appears evident, since they are descended from God, they are a heavenly race, they are derived from above. The heathen were wont to feign that their heroes and great men were descended from the gods, but God's people are descended from the true and living God, without any fiction. Ps. xxii. 30. "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." That is, a seed, a posterity, shall serve him, and it shall be accounted to the Lord for his posterity or offspring.

Now the people of God may be considered as descending from God, and as being his posterity, either remotely or immediately.

First. They are *remotely* descended from God. The church is a distinct race, that originally came from God. Other men are of the earth, they are of earthly derivation, they are the posterity of men; but the church is the posterity of God. Thus it is said, Gen. vi. 2, "That the sons of God saw the daughters of men, that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose." The sons of God were the children of the church, of the posterity of Seth; the daughters of men were those that were born out of the church, and of the posterity of Cain, and those that adhered to him.

It was God that set up the church in the world, and those, who were the first founders of the church, were of God, and were called specially *the sons of God.* Seth was the seed that God appointed. Gen. iv. 25. "And Adam knew his wife again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth. For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew." Adam, in Luke's genealogy of Christ, (Luke iii. 38, "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God,) is called the son of God; possibly, not only because he was immediately created by God, but also because he was from God, and was begotten by him. As

he was a good man, and was the founder of the church, of which Christ himself became a son, he was the first in the line of the church, and as such he was from God. When the church was almost extinct God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, and afterwards out of Haran. Abraham was one immediately from God, and all God's people in all succeeding ages are accounted as the children of Abraham. God promised Abraham that his seed should be as the stars of heaven, and as the sand on the sea shore, meaning primarily not his posterity according to the flesh. John the baptist said, God is able of the stones to raise up children unto Abraham. Those are the seed of Abraham, as we are taught in the New Testament, that are of the faith of Abraham; Christians, as well as Jews, are the seed of Abraham. Gal. iii. 29. "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." So the church is the seed of Jacob, who is called God's son. Hosea xi. 1. "When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called *my Son* out of Egypt." All God's people are called Israel; not only his posterity according to the flesh, but proselytes' of old, and gentile Christians now under the gospel. The sincerely godly, and they only, are the true Israel.

So the people of God are descended from God the Father originally, as they are descended from Christ the Son of God. Christians are called *the seed of Christ.* Gal. iii. 29. "And if ye be Christ's," &c. They are, as it were, his *posterity;* Christ calls them his *children.* Heb. ii. 13. "Behold I and the children which thou hast given me." So that if we trace the pedigree of God's people up to their original, they will be found to be descended from God: they are of heaven, they are not of this world. Other men are of the earth, and are earthly, but these are heavenly, and are of heaven. The wicked are called the men of this world. Ps. xvii. 14. "From men which are thy hand, O Lord, from men of the world which have their portion in this life, and whose belly thou fillest with thy hid treasure: they are full of children, and leave the rest of their substance to their babes." The first beginnings of the church were from God, the great founder of the church. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and those men, who under him have been founders, were of God, were of him. God chose them, called them, and created them for this purpose. Since which, God's people are descended one from another; the church is continued and propagated, as it were, by generation. If there were no ordinary and stated means made use of for the continuing and propagating the church, it would not be so; but God's people are made the instruments of one another's conversion, by begetting one another's souls. The church is continued by itself instrumentally through all generations, the people of God are begotten through the education, instruction, and endeavours of

those who were God's people before. Therefore the church is represented in scripture, as being the mother of its members. Gal. iv. 26. "But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." Believers are the children of the church, as they are often called. Isaiah xlix. 20. "The children which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too strait for me; give place to me, that I may dwell." Isaiah liv. 1. "Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord." And many other places.

God's people are often, through their education and instruction, the spiritual parents of those of whom they are the natural parents. The ministers of the word and ordinances are spiritual fathers. The apostle tells the Christian Corinthians, that he had begotten them through the gospel.

Secondly. God's people are *immediately* begotten of God. When they become saints, they are *born again*, they have a new nature given them, they have a new life begun, they are renewed in the whole man by a new generation and birth wherein they are born of God. John i. 12, 13. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were *born*, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but *of God*." They are born of the Spirit of God. John iii. 8. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is *born of the Spirit*." God is said to have formed the church from the womb. Isai. xliv. 2. "Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob my servant; and thou, Jeshurun, whom I have chosen."

This truth also may suggest to us a few profitable reflections.

First. Christians ought to bear with one another. It appears from what has been said, that they are all of one kindred, that they have a relation to other Christians which they have not to the rest of the world; being of a distinct race from them, but of the same race one with another. They are descended all along from the same progenitors; they are the children of the same universal church of God; they are all the children of Abraham; they are the seed of Jesus Christ; they are the offspring of God. And they are yet much more alike, than their being of the same race originally argues them to be: they are also immediately the children of the same Father. God hath begotten all by the same Word and Spirit; they are all of one family, and should therefore love as brethren. 1 Peter iii. 8. "Finally be ye all of one mind,

having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

It is very unbecoming those who are God's offspring, to entertain a spirit of hatred and ill will one towards another. It is very unbecoming to be backward in helping and assisting one another, and supplying each other's wants; much more, to contrive and seek one another's hurt, to be revengeful one towards another.

Secondly. Let Christians take heed so to walk, that they may not dishonour their pedigree. You are of a very honourable race, more honourable by far than if you were the offspring of kings, and had royal blood in your veins; you are a heavenly offspring, the seed of Jesus Christ, the children of God. They that are of noble race are wont to value themselves highly upon the honour of their families, to dwell on their titles, their coats of arms, and their ensigns of honour, and to recount the exploits of their illustrious forefathers. How much more careful should you be of the honour of your descent, that you in nothing behave yourself unworthy of the great God, the eternal and omnipotent King of heaven and earth, whose offspring you are!

There are many things that are very base and too mean for such as you; such are a giving way to earthly mindedness, a grovelling like moles in the earth, a suffering your soul to cleave to those earthly things, which ought to be neglected and despised by those who are of heavenly descent; an indulgence of the lusts of the flesh, suffering the soul to be immersed in filth, being taken up with mean and unworthy delights common to the beasts, being intemperate in the gratification of any carnal appetite whatsoever, or a being much concerned about earthly honour. It is surely a disgrace to them, who are accounted to God for a generation, much to care whether they are accounted great upon this dunghill. So it is unworthy of your noble descent to be governed by your passions: you should be guided by higher principles of reason and virtue, and an universal respect to the glory and honour of God.

But Christians should seek after those things which will be to the honour of their birth, after spiritual wisdom and knowledge of the most worthy and noble truths. They should seek more and more an acquaintance with God, and to be assimilated to him, their great progenitor, and their immediate Father, that they may have the image of his excellent and divine perfections. They should endeavour to act like God, wherein they are capable of imitation of him. They should seek heavenly mindedness, those noble appetites after heavenly and spiritual enjoyments, a noble ambition after heavenly glory, a contempt of the trifles and mean things of this world. They should seek after those delights and satisfactions that can be enjoyed by none but heavenly minds. They should exercise a spirit of true, universal, and disinterested

love and confidence, and Christian charity. They should be much in devotion, and divine contemplation.

Thirdly. We see here a reason why Christians are of so different a nature and temper from the rest of the world. The truly godly are very different in their disposition from others. They hate those things that the rest of the world love, and love those things for which the rest of the world have no relish; insomuch that others are ready to wonder that they should place any happiness in a strict observance of the self-denying duties of religion; they wonder what delight they can take in spending so much time in meditation and prayer, and that they do not place happiness in those things which themselves do. 1 Peter iv. 4. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot; speaking evil of you." But the reason is, they are of a different race, and so derive different dispositions.

It is ordinary to see those who are of different families, of a different temper. The natural temper of parents is commonly in some degree transmitted to their posterity. Indeed, all agree in many things, for all are of the same blood originally; all are descended from the same Adam, and the same Noah. But Christians are born again of another stock, different from all the rest of the world; and therefore they are of a temper by themselves, wherein none of the rest of the world agree with them. Rev. i. 6. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father: to him be glory and dominion, for ever and ever."

II. True Christians are a Royal Priesthood.

The two offices of King and Priest were accounted very honourable both among Jews and heathens; but it was a thing not known under the law of Moses, that the same person should sustain both those offices in a stated manner; and while Moses himself is said to have been king in Jeshurun, yet his brother Aaron was the high priest. Those who were kings by divine appointment in Israel, were of another tribe from the priesthood, viz: the tribe of Judah. Before the giving the law we have an instance of one who was both king and priest, viz: Melchizedeck. Gen. xiv. 18. "And Melchizedeck, king of Salem, brought forth bread and wine; and he was the priest of the most high God."

Therefore, in some of the prophecies of Christ, it is spoken of as a remarkable thing of him, that he should be a Priest after the order of Melchizedeck. Ps. cx. 4. "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedeck." The same again is prophesied of as a wonderful thing by Zechariah, that he should be a priest

upon a throne. Zech. vi. 13. "Even he shall build the temple of the Lord; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne; and the counsel of peace shall be between them both." In this respect the gospel dispensation differs from the legal, that it reveals the compatibleness of the two offices. One person, Jesus Christ, is Antitype of both kings and priests, under the law; and as it is the will of Christ, who became in all things like unto us, that his disciples should in many things become like unto him, so it is in this among others. As Christ is the Son of God, so those that are Christ's, are the children of God; as Christ is the heir of God, so as Christ liveth, it is his will that they should live also. As Christ rose from the dead, so it is the will of Christ that his saints should rise also. As Christ is in heaven in glory, so it is the will of Christ that they should be with him where he is. So, as Christ is both King and Priest, so shall believers be made kings and priests. What is said in the text, is either with respect to what they now are, or what they shall be hereafter. The apostle says, "ye are a royal priesthood;" that is, ye have those honours in reversion. Christians are kings here, as a king who is in his minority; who, though the crown is his right, has not yet come actually to reign. They are indeed in an exalted state while here, but not as they will be hereafter. Christians while here are indeed priests, but not as they will be. Christians are called kings and priests here, in this world. Rev. i. 6. "And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father." But in Rev. v. the saints in heaven speak of this as the consequence of their glory and exaltation. Rev. v. 9, 10. "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests; that we should reign on the earth."

1. Christians are Kings.

When Christians are called kings, the scriptures include both what they actually have in this world, and what they have in a future state. The reward which our Lord Jesus promised to his disciples, was a kingdom. Luke xxii. 29. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." Christians, having this promise, are therefore heirs of a kingdom here, which they are hereafter to receive. James ii. 5. "Hearken, my beloved brethren; hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"

The reward of the saints is represented as a kingdom, because the possession of a kingdom is the height of human advancement in this world, and as it is the common opinion that those who have a kingdom have the greatest possible happiness. The happiness of a kingdom, or royal state, for which it is so much admired by mankind, consists in these things:

First. The honour of a kingdom.

Secondly. The possessions of kings.

Thirdly. The government, or authority of kings.

Now with respect to each of these, the happiness of the saints is far greater than that of the kings, and greatest potentates in the world.

First. True Christians will be advanced to honours far above those of earthly kings, they will have a vastly higher dignity than any princes. If these are nobly descended, it is not so great an honour as to be the sons of God; if they are nobly educated, and have their minds formed for government, and have princely qualifications; these qualifications are not so honourable as those with which God endows his saints, whose minds he fills with divine knowledge, and gives them true and perfect holiness. Princes appear honourable from their outward enjoyment of honour and dignity, their royal robes, their stately palaces, and their splendid equipage. But these are not so honourable as those white robes, those inherent ornaments, with which the saints shall appear in heaven, with which they "shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." What is a king's palace to those mansions in heaven, that Christ prepares for his saints? The honour of the creature consists in likeness and nearness to the Creator in heaven. The saints shall be like him, for they shall see him as he is; they shall be most near to him, shall be admitted to a most intimate fellowship.

Secondly. The saints shall have greater and more extensive possessions than any earthly monarch. One reason for which the state of kings is admired, is their wealth; they have the most precious things laid up in their treasures. We read of the peculiar treasure of kings. Eccles. ii. 8. "I gathered me also silver and gold, and the peculiar treasure of kings and of the provinces: I gat me men singers and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men, as musical instruments, and that of all sorts;" that is, the peculiar treasure of other kings. David conquered and subdued many kings, and spoiled their peculiar treasure, which fell to his son Solomon.

But the precious treasures of kings are not to be compared to those precious things, which Christ will give his saints in another world; the gold tried in the fire that Christ has purchased with

his own blood, those precious jewels, those graces and joys of his Spirit, and that beauty of mind with which he will endow them. Kings' possessions are very extensive, especially were they thus, when kings were generally absolute, and their whole dominions, their subjects and their fortunes, were looked upon as their possessions. But these fall short of the extensive possessions of the saints, who possess all things; they are the heirs of God, and all that is God's is theirs, so far as it can contribute to their happiness. Rev. xxi. 7. "He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son." 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "Therefore let no man glory in men, for all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours."

Thirdly. The saints shall also be advanced to the authority of kings. Christ has appointed to them a kingdom, and in that kingdom they shall reign. It is promised concerning the saints that they shall reign. Rev. v. 10. "And hath made us unto our God, kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth." Rev. xxii. 5. "And there shall be no night there: and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever." It is evident that they shall have a kingdom with respect to rule and government, as appears, Rev. ii. 26, 27. "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over all nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers; even as I received of my Father." But we must see that we rightly understand this. They shall not be appointed by God as sovereigns of the world, without any superior to direct them; neither shall they be properly deputies or viceroys, as king Agrippa and some other kings were the deputies of the Roman emperors; but they shall reign in fellowship with Christ as joint heirs; they shall reign in the same kingdom with him, and shall have the happiness of having things done according to their will as much as if their own wills were paramount. Christ wills their will. All things will be disposed in the best manner for them, and to promote their happiness. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."

The reigning of the saints will consist partly in *judging;* for the saints shall judge the world, angels and men with Christ. Matth. xix. 28. "And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall

sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life!" How earnestly do men seek a kingdom! What fatigues, what dangers, what bloodshed, will they not encounter! In seeking conversion, you seek a kingdom. You who are poor, you who are children, have opportunity to obtain a kingdom; to advance yourselves to higher dignity, to more substantial honours, to greater possessions, to more precious treasures, to be clothed in robes of richer splendour, and to fill a loftier throne than those enjoyed by the greatest earthly monarchs. It is a Crown that you are to run for, an incorruptible crown, to be given you by the Great King of heaven, and to be worn by you as long as his throne shall endure. What encouragement is here afforded to the saints under afflictions and reproaches; what are they, to the worth and honour of a heavenly kingdom? When you shall have a crown of glory placed on your head, and be seated on Christ's throne, and shine forth as the light, and are seated at his royal banquet, then you will suffer no more for ever; all trouble, all reproach, shall be driven away; you will be too high to be reached by the malice of men and devils, and shall soon forget all your sorrows.

2. True Christians are Priests of God. The priesthood under the law was a very honourable and sacred office. Heb. v. 4. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." It was on account of this honour that those proud men, Korah and his company, envied Aaron; and God asserted and vindicated Aaron's right to it, by causing his rod to bud.

It was an honour which, before the giving of the law, when every particular family was wont to offer sacrifices for themselves, that the first-born used to claim, and therefore the birthright was so much esteemed and valued. Therefore Jacob had such a desire of having the birthright of his brother Esau, and Esau's despising of it is spoken of as a great instance of his profaneness. A priest is said to be a chief man among his people. Lev. xxi. 4. "But he shall not defile himself, being a chief man among his people, to profane himself." Because the office of the priesthood was so honourable, it is noticed as a wicked contempt of it in several wicked kings, that they made of the meanest of the people priests. The office was so honourable, that a king, Uzziah, coveted the honour of it, and it is mentioned as an instance of his pride that he did so. 2 Chron. xxvi. 16. "But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the Lord his God, and went into the temple of the Lord to burn in-

cense upon the altar of incense." And it was a very sacred office, and that above all other offices, and therefore those things were forbidden the priest that were lawful for all others; such as to be defiled for the dead, or to take to wife one that is put away from her husband, and the reason is given, Levit. xxi. 6. "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God, for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer; therefore they shall be holy. They shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane, neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband; for he is holy unto his God. Thou shalt sanctify him therefore, for he offereth the bread of thy God, he shall be holy unto thee: for I, the Lord, which sanctify you, am holy."

Jesus Christ is the only proper priest that is to offer sacrifices, and make atonement for sin under the New Testament. He was the priest, of whom all the priests of old were typical. But yet all believers are herein in a measure conformed to their head, and assimilated to him. The priesthood now is no longer confined to one family, to Aaron and his sons, but all the true Israel are priests. Every true Christian hath a work and office that is as sacred as that of the priests was under the law, and every one is advanced to a like honour, and indeed to a greater. But how every true Christian is a priest of God will appear in the following things.

First. Every true Christian is allowed as near an access to God and as free a use of the sacred things as the priests were of old. God under the law dwelt in the tabernacle and temple, that were the symbol of his presence, and those places were holy. The seed of Aaron might go into the holy place to minister before the Lord, but if any other came nigh, he was to be put to death. Numb. iii. 10. "And thou shalt appoint Aaron and his sons, and they shall wait on their priest's office: and the stranger that cometh nigh, shall be put to death."

But now all are allowed to come nigh, we are all allowed a free access to God, to come with boldness and confidence. God's people are not kept at such a distance now as they were under the law. The church then was in its minority, and the heir while a child, differs nothing from a servant. The servant is not allowed the free access of a child, he is kept more at a distance with fear and dread. Agreeably to the nature of that dispensation, there were not those special discoveries of the grace and love of God that are now made, and which invite rather than forbid near access.

When God was wont to appear to the children of Israel, it was more with terror and manifestations of awful majesty, and not so much with the discoveries of grace as now. When God appeared

on mount Sinai, it was in flaming fire, and with thunder, and lightning, and earthquakes; but in how different a manner did he appear, when he appeared in the person of Christ, with mildness, and gentleness, and love! There is much the same difference between us and them with respect to the liberty of access to God, as there was between the liberty of access of the children of Israel at mount Sinai, and the liberty which Christ's disciples had of approach to him when he was upon earth. At mount Sinai, only Moses and Aaron, and Nadab and Abihu, were allowed to come up into the mount, and none but Moses was to approach nigh. Exod. xxiv. 1. "And he said unto Moses, Come up unto the Lord, thou and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and Seventy of the elders of Israel; and worship ye afar off." But if any other presumed to touch the mount, God would break forth upon him. But Christ's disciples used daily to converse with him, as an intimate friend. Heb. xii. 18. "For ye are not come unto the mount that might *not* be touched, and that burneth with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest." Yea, Christians are now allowed as near an approach unto God, as the high priest himself, who was allowed a much nearer approach than any of the other priests. God's dwelling place was the temple, but more especially was it in the holy of holies, in the mercy-seat between the cherubim. There was a veil which separated that part of the temple from the rest, and no one might ever enter that veil but the high priest, and that but once a year; not oftener, upon pain of death. Levit. xvi. 2. "And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place, within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark, that he die not: for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy-seat." The way into the holiest of all, was not as yet made manifest, but now it is. Heb. ix. 7, 8. "But into the second, went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people. The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as yet the first tabernacle was standing."

But now we are all allowed as near an access to God as the high priest only was under the law, and with more freedom, for he might approach but once a year; but Christians my approach boldly at all times, through the blood of Christ, without any danger of dying. Heb. iv. 16. "Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." The throne of grace and the mercy-seat are the same thing. "Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is to

say, his flesh; and having an high priest over the house of God. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water." That access into the holiest of all was allowed to all under the gospel, and at any time: it was signified by the rending of the veil upon the death of Christ, for then was that blood shed by which we have access. Matth. xxvii. 50, 51. "Jesus when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent."

But especially will the access of saints in another world be much more near and familiar than that of the high priest. They shall not only enter into the holy of holies, but shall dwell with God in it, for heaven is the holiest of all. They shall then dwell in God's presence, they shall see his face, which no man can see and live.

In this world, though there is greater liberty of access than there was of old, yet still Christians are kept at a great distance from God in comparison of what they will be in heaven, where they shall be admitted even to higher privileges than Moses in the mount, when he besought God to show him his glory. They shall then see with open face, and shall know as they are known.

Secondly. Christians are a priesthood with respect to their offerings to God. The principal part of the work of the priests of old was to offer sacrifice, and to burn incense. As the priests of old offered sacrifice, so the work of Christians is to offer up spiritual sacrifices to God. 1 Peter ii. 5. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." And here,

1st. Christians offer up their own hearts to God in sacrifice: they dedicate themselves to God. Rom. vi. 13. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." The Christian gives himself to God freely as of mere choice; he does it heartily; he desires to be God's, and to belong to no other; he gives all the faculties of his soul to God. He gives God his heart, and it is offered to God as a sacrifice in two ways.

Of these, the first is, when the heart is broken for sin. A sacrifice, before it can be offered, must be wounded and slain. The heart of a true Christian is first wounded by a sense of sin, of the great evil and danger of it, and is slain with godly sorrow and true repentance. When the heart truly repents, it dies unto sin. Repentance is compared unto a death in the word of God. Rom. vi. 6, 7, 8. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we

should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Gal. ii. 20. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." As Christ, when he was offered, was offered broken upon the cross: so there is some likeness to this, when a soul is converted; the heart is offered to God slain and broken Ps. li. 17. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise."

The second way is, when a Christian offers his heart to God, flaming with love. The sacrifice of old was not only to be slain, but to be burnt upon the altar; it was to ascend in flame and smoke, and so to be a sweet savour to God.

That fire upon the altar was a type of two things; it was a type of the fire of the wrath of God, and it was also a type of the fire of the Spirit of God, or of divine love. The Holy Ghost is often compared to fire. With respect to the former, Christ alone is the sacrifice offered in the flame of God's wrath, but with regard to the latter, the hearts of the children of men are offered in the flame of divine love, and ascend up to God in that flame. This divine love is fire from heaven, as the fire upon the altar of old was. When a soul is drawn to God in true conversion, fire comes down from God out of heaven, in which the heart is offered in sacrifice, and the soul is baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

In many of the sacrifices that were offered, only the fat about the inwards was burnt upon the altar; which fat of the inwards thus rising in flame, represented the offering of the soul. It is that which God looks at; it is that which must be offered in sacrifice to God. Especially hereafter, when the saints will be made priests in a more glorious manner than at present, will they offer up their hearts wholly to God in the flame of love. They shall, as it were, all be transformed into love, as burning oil is transformed into flame; and so, in that flame, shall they ascend up to God. Their souls will be as the angels, who are as a flame of fire not only for activity in God's service, but for love too. They shall be a flame ever burning, which shall burn longer than the fire upon the altar in Israel, that never went out, from the time that fire came down out of heaven in the wilderness, till the carrying away into Babylon.

2d. This spiritual priesthood offers to God the sacrifice of Praise. Many of their sacrifices under the law were sacrifices of peace offerings, which were mostly for thanksgiving and praise.

But the spiritual sacrifice of the hearty and sincere praises of a saint, are more acceptable to God than all the bulls, and rams, and he-goats that they offered. The heartfelt praises of one true Christian are of more account with God than all those two and twenty thousand oxen, and an hundred and twenty thousand sheep which Solomon offered to God at the dedication of the temple, as a sacrifice of peace offerings. Praise is called a sacrifice. Heb. xiii. 15. "By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name." Ps. l. 13, 14. "Will I eat the flesh of bulls, or drink the blood of goats? Offer unto God thanksgiving, and pay thy vows unto the Most High;" ver. 23, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright, will I show the salvation of God;" Ps. lxix. 30, 31, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." Praises are therefore in Hosea called *calves of our lips*, because they are like *calves offered in sacrifice;* Hosea xiv. 2, "Take with you words, and turn to the Lord: say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips." Only true Christians offer those sacrifices. However hypocrites pretend to praise God, and to offer thanksgiving to him, yet they, being insincere, offer not sacrifices with which God is well pleased; they offer not spiritual sacrifices, and therefore they are not of the spiritual priesthood. In heaven especially are the saints a holy priesthood upon this account; whose work it is for ever to offer these sacrifices to God, who cease not day nor night to praise God and sing forth their ardent joyful hallelujahs. They sing a new song, a song that never will end, and never will grow old.

3d. The next sacrifice which is offered by this spiritual priesthood, is Obedience, sincere obedience. The sacrifices under the law did not only represent Christ's *satisfying for sin* by suffering, but they also represented Christ's *obeying* in suffering; for the sacrifices under the law were not only for propitiation, but they were for purchasing benefits, and so typified not only the satisfaction, but merit which was by obedience. Ps. xl. 6, 7, 8. "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened; burnt offering, and sin offering hast thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight *to do thy will*, O my God; yea, *thy law* is within my heart." And though the obedience of saints has no merit, yet it is pleasing and acceptable to God; it is as a sweet smelling savour, and is compared to sacrifices, and preferred before them. 1 Sam. xv. 22. "And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of

the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the fat of rams." Christians, by offering obedience to God in their lives and conversation, do what the apostle calls offering their bodies to be a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, as their reasonable service. They offer their bodies, that is, they dedicate their bodies to holy uses and purposes; they yield their members as instruments of righteousness unto holiness. The soul, while here, acts externally by the body. And in this Christians serve God; they yield their eyes, their ears, their tongues, their hands, and feet, as servants to God, to be obedient to the dictates of his word, and of his Holy Spirit in the soul.

4th. Another sacrifice which we shall mention as offered by this spiritual priesthood, is Charity, or expressions of Christian Love in gifts to others. If the gift flows from a spirit of Christian love, although it be but a cup of cold water, it is an acceptable sacrifice to God. And indeed whatsoever is given for a pious use, if it be to promote religion, and uphold the public worship of God, or to benefit a particular person, if it be done from a good spirit, it is a Christian sacrifice. Heb. xiii. 16. "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

But sacrifices of this kind may principally be ranked under two heads; of which the first is,

Liberality to ministers of the gospel. The priests of old lived upon the sacrifices that were offered to God, and what is now offered to ministers for their comfortable and honourable support Christ looks upon as offered to himself. "He that receiveth you, receiveth me." Matth. x. 40. Thus Paul says of those things that were sent him by his hearers, that it was a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God. Philip. iv. 14, &c. "Notwithstanding ye have well done that ye did communicate with my affliction. Now, ye Philippians, know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because that I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account. But I have all, and abound: I am full, having received of Epaphroditus the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God."

The second is Bounty to the poor. Christ accepts what is done to them as being done to himself. Matth. xxv. 40. "And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one the of least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." This God prefers before the legal sacrifices.

Hosea vi. 6. "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."

5th. Another offering of this spiritual priesthood to God, is the Prayer of faith. Though this is rather compared to *incense* in scripture than to a *sacrifice*, yet it is equally an evidence of their priesthood. Incense was that sweet confection which we read of. Exod. xxx. 34. "And the Lord said unto Moses, Take unto thee sweet spices, stacte, and onycha, and galbanum; these sweet spices, with pure frankincense; of each shall there be a like weight." These they were wont to burn upon the censer as they offered it, which made a most fragrant smell. That incense is a type of the merits of Jesus Christ, and seems also to be a type of the prayers of God's people in faith of the former. It was the custom, when the priest in the temple was burning incense, for the people to be praying without. Luke i. 10. "And the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense." And gracious prayer is compared to incense. Ps. cxli. 2. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." The prayer of faith is as a fragrant savour to God, through the merits of him towards whom that faith is exercised.

REFLECTIONS.

1. Here are great motives for all earnestly to seek that they may become true Christians. It is a great honour to be priests of God. It was a great honour of old to be a priest under the law; it was a greater in some respects than to be a king; because they were nearer to God, and they in their work were more immediately concerned with him; it was a more holy and divine office. But more honourable is it to be of the spiritual priesthood. The access to God is nearer, and an infinitely greater privilege. Especially is the access to God which they will have in another world, where they shall see God, and shall converse with Christ as a man with his friend. If ever a king was ambitious of the honour of the legal priesthood, surely you may well desire the spiritual, which is an eternal priesthood.

Consider that you are capable of receiving this priesthood. Of old, those who were not of the posterity of Aaron, were incapable of the priesthood; it was in vain for them to seek it; but it is not in vain for you to seek this spiritual priesthood. Consider also that you have a call to it, you have warrant sufficient. It would be a dreadful presumption for you to seek this honour if you had not a call to it. Heb. v. 4. "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God as was Aaron." But you are called; and now it would be presumption and profane contempt in you to refuse it; to refuse such an honour as God of-

fers you. Take heed, therefore, that there be not among you any profane person as Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birthright, and sold the priesthood that belonged to it. Take heed that you do not sell this spiritual priesthood for a morsel of meat, or for the trifles of this world, that you are not more concerned about a little worldly pelf or vain glory, than about that which is so sacred and honourable.

For direction, that you may be one of this spiritual priesthood, seek of God his holy anointing; that is, that God would pour out his spirit in his sanctifying influences upon you. The priests of old were consecrated by the holy anointing oil. Exod. xxix. 7. "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him." Exod. xxx. 30. "And thou shalt anoint Aaron and his sons, and consecrate them that they may minister unto me in the priest's office." If you are here separated for this holy station and service, you must have that holy anointing of the spirit of God, typified by the oil that was poured upon Aaron's head; the holy anointing oil of God must be upon you.

Let all who profess themselves Christians, take heed that they do not defile themselves and profane their sacred character. There was great strictness required of old of the priests, lest they should defile themselves, and profane their office, and it was regarded as a dreadful thing to profane it. So holy a God hath threatened in the New Testament, that "if any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy." 1 Cor. iii. 17. "As Christians are here called the *temple of God*, so it is said, in the fifth verse, "Ye are a *spiritual house*, a holy priesthood." Avoid the commission of all immoralities, or things that have a horrid filthiness in them, things that will dreadfully profane the sacred name by which you are called, and the sacred station wherein you are set.

Take heed especially of lascivious impurities. Such things were looked upon as defiling the holy office of the priesthood of old, insomuch, that if but a daughter of a priest was guilty of whoredom, she was to be burnt. Remember Hophni and Phineas, how sorely God dealt with them for their profaning their office by their impurities; and with good Eli, that he was no more thorough to restrain them. God brought a curse upon the whole family which never was removed. God took away the priesthood from him, and took away the ark of the covenant from him and from Israel, and delivered it into captivity, and fulfilled his threatening, that there should not be an old man of his house for ever.

Take heed of every sin: an allowing any sin whatever is a dreadful presumption of your holy character.

3. See that you well execute your office. Offer up your heart in sacrifice. Get and keep a near access to God. Come with boldness; offer up a heart broken for sin; offer up flaming with love to God; offer praise to God; praise God for his glorious excellency; for his love and mercy. Consider what great things you have to praise God for; the redemption of Jesus Christ, his sufferings, his obedience, and the gift of that holiness, which makes you like unto God.

Be ready to distribute, willing to communicate, and do good; consider it as part of your office thus to do, to which you are called and anointed, and as a sacrifice well-pleasing to God; pity others in distress; be ready to help one another; God will have mercy and not sacrifice.

And be much in offering up your prayers to God; and see that all your offerings are offered upon the right altar, otherwise they will be abominable to God. Offer your hearts to God through Jesus Christ. In his name present the sacrifice of praise, obedience, charity: of prayer on the golden altar perfumed with the incense of Christ's merits. Your reward will be to have this honour in heaven, to be exalted to that glorious priesthood, to be made a priest unto God for ever and ever.

III. True Christians are a Holy Nation. And here I shall briefly show,

1. How they are a distinct nation.
2. How they are holy.

1. Christians are a distinct nation.

First. The saints are all of the same native country. Heaven is the native country of the Church. They are born from above; their Father, of whom they are begotten, is in heaven. The principles that govern their hearts are drawn from heaven, since the Holy Ghost, whose immediate fruits those principles are, is from heaven. The word of God, which is the seed by which they are begotten, is from heaven. The bible is a book, as it were, sent down from heaven. The saints in this world are not in their native country, but are pilgrims and strangers on the earth, they are near akin to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and are properly of that society. Heb. xii. 22, 23. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels: to the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect." Heaven is a country that much better suits their natures than this earth, because it is their native climate. When they are in heaven, they breathe their native air; in heaven is their inheritance. Heaven is the proper country of the church, where the greater

part of the church is, and where they all will be, and where is their settled abode; from thence all that are now upon earth are derived, and thither they will return again. Though they are for a little while dwelling at a distance from their native country, yet they are of the same nation with those who now dwell there.

Secondly. All Christians speak the same language. They all profess the same fundamental doctrines; they hold fast the form of sound words that was once delivered to the saints. 2 Tim. i. 13. "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." They all use the same language to God in prayer and praise; they express the same humility and repentance in confessing their sins, the same adoration and admiring sense of God's glory and excellency, the same humble submission and resignation, and the same thankfulness. In like manner do they show forth God's praises, expressing the same faith and humble dependence in the mercy of God, and the same love and longing desires after God. The saints in all ages speak the same language with David and the saints of old. The spirit of God teaches the saints the same language in their prayers; their prayers are the breathings of the same spirit.

Indeed the saints while in this world are but learning the heavenly language, and therefore speak it but imperfectly, and with a stammering tongue, and with a pronunciation that in many things resembles their old language. The tongues of the saints are renewed in their conversion. Thus the conversion of the Gentiles is represented by their having a new language. Zeph. iii. 9. "For then will I turn to the people of a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent." And in this sense is that also to be understood. Isaiah xix. 18. "In that day shall five cities in the land of Egypt speak the language of Canaan, and swear to the Lord of hosts: one shall be called, The city of destruction." As it is said of the new song which the saints sing, that no man could learn that song but those that are redeemed from the earth, so no man can learn that language but those who are of this holy nation.

Thirdly. They are under the same government. The Christians are one society, one body politic; and therefore, as here the church is represented by a nation, so oftentimes is it called a city. They are subject to the same King, Jesus Christ. He is the head of the church, he is the head of this body politic. Indeed all men are subject to the power and providence of this King; but those who are in his kingdom of grace, all acknowledge the same King, own his rightful sovereignty over them,

are willing to be subject to him, to submit to his will, and yield obedience to his commands. Ps. cx. 3. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth."

They are all governed by the same laws, and all subject themselves to the same rules. The commands of God that are obeyed by the saints, are the same all over the world. There is the same method of government, there are the same means of government, the same outward and visible means, the same officers, gospel, and gospel ministers, in like manner appointed and sent forth by the head of the church, the same visible order and discipline appointed for all. And there are the same inward and special means of government. Christ governs his people in a peculiar manner. He immediately influences their wills and inclinations, and powerfully brings them to a compliance with God's commands and rules. They are a society united in the same public interest and concerns. It is by the same covenant and promises that they have their inheritance, and that they hold their title to their enjoyments, as a people of the same nation hold their temporal rights by the same rule, and citizens hold their rights by the same municipal laws. The prosperity of this society tends to the advantage of the interests of the particular parts. A Christian has the same reason to be concerned for the flourishing of the church, and the advancement of religion, as a particular subject has for the flourishing of the nation or kingdom. When the church is in flourishing circumstances, the souls of particular saints are like to be flourishing; and when the church is in low languishing circumstances, particular souls are generally the same. When iniquity abounds, the love of many waxes cold. As it is the interest of every subject to have the nation flourish, so it is the interest of every Christian to have the church flourish. So Christians have the same common enemies that seek their hurt, and overthrow. He that is an enemy to one saint as a saint, is an enemy to all. They are jointly called to resist the same powers of darkness; the church here upon earth is as an army that goes forth under Jesus Christ, the captain of their salvation, to resist the commmon adversary.

REFLECTIONS.

Be exhorted to join yourself to this nation. As it was of old, those, who were of other nations, if they were brought to the acknowledgment of the God of Israel, and to the true religion, and were circumcised, were received as being of the nation of Israel, and were accounted as those that were descended from Abraham and Jacob; so now is there free liberty to any to come and join themselves to this nation, and they shall be received and admitted

to the same rights and privileges, and be in all respects treated as the same people. And especially those now under the gospel, are invited to come. Let them be who they will, they may come and join this people and be welcome. There is no wall of partition to separate this people from others, to exclude those of other nations. The gates of the new Jerusalem are always open, to receive all whose hearts incline them to come. And here consider,

First. There is no nation under so happy a government as this. The Lord Jesus Christ is their King, and he is a most glorious King. He is the eternal, and infinitely glorious Son of God. He is a most wise prince, he knows how to govern, he perfectly understands how best to promote the interest of his people. He is a most merciful and gracious King, who greatly loves his people, and most earnestly and faithfully seeks their interest. His people are redeemed with his own blood, and he will surely seek their welfare. And he is a most powerful prince. He is able to defend his people against all their enemies.

This nation is governed by most wise and righteous laws. As it was said of Israel of old, Deut. iv. 8. "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you this day?" so and more eminent is it true of the spiritual Israel, since the law of God has been set forth to us in a far more clear and lovely light, by the rules and precepts of the gospel. The manner of Christ's government in the kingdom of his grace is most excellent, and different from that of all other kings; for he governs by the powerful influence of his Spirit upon the heart, whereby he sweetly inclines them to a willing and chosen subjection to him.

This nation is a free people. The happy government under which they live, is most consistent with freedom; it does not in the least infringe upon the liberty of the subject, there is nothing like slavery in the kingdom of God. The law of this nation is a law of liberty. Those that are sinners, are slaves; they are slaves to their lusts, slaves to Satan, slaves to the cruellest of masters. But they whom the Son makes free, are free indeed. The subjects of the heavenly King are all as free under his government as a man's children are in their father's house. The government is a paternal government; the King looks upon all his subjects as children.

Under so happy a government are this nation. Be persuaded therefore to join yourself to them, and be of them. Ps. cxliv. 15. "Happy is that people that is in such a case. Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord." Ps. xxxiii. 12. "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance."

Secondly. There is no nation that dwell in such love and peace as this holy nation enjoys. The happiness of a people very much

consists in its peace: a nation is never more miserable than when it is rent by civil wars, or disturbed by intestine broils. Nothing tends more to the happiness of the people than when they are all united as brethren, and with one heart seek the good of one another, and the community.

But no nation enjoys so much happiness of this kind as this holy nation. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the King of this people, is the Prince of peace; his kingdom is a kingdom of peace. Every member of this society has in his heart a principle of peace and love. Love is the bond of perfectness that unites the members of this society together. They all have a disposition heartily to seek and promote each other's good.

Thirdly. This nation have for their settled abode a most glorious land. The heavenly Canaan is *their* land, it is a land that God hath desired, and that he hath blessed above all lands. There is no land so fertile of excellent fruits, so full of delights. There grows the tree of life in plenty, there flows the river of the water of life. There is no curse, nothing that hurts or offends. This is a delightful garden, this is the Paradise of God. Hearken, therefore, consider of the blessedness of this people; is it not well to be one of them? I would now invite you in the name of Christ, as Moses invited his father-in-law to join himself to that nation. Numb. x. 29. "And Moses said unto Hobab, the son of Raguel the Midianite, Moses' father-in-law, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said, I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel."

2. Christians, as a nation, are Holy. Their holiness is relative, and it is also inherent.

First. Christians are a holy nation by a relative holiness, as they are set apart by God for a divine and holy use. So things are often called holy in scripture. The utensils of the tabernacle and temple are in this sense called holy; the priests' garments are called holy, the places of worship appointed of God in the old testament are called holy, because they were set apart by him for a holy use and service.

Things thus set apart are said to be sanctified. Thus Jeremiah is said to have been sanctified, before he came forth out of the womb. Jer. i. 5. "Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee; and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations." God sanctified, that is, God set him apart for this holy use and service, to be a prophet to the nations, as Paul says of himself, Gal. i. 15. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." So the people of Israel of old seem to be called an holy nation. Deut. vii. 6. "For

thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." Not that they were a holy people by inherent holiness, for God often tells them that they are a stiff-necked people. But God had called and separated them from other nations to be the keepers of the sacred oracles, and for other purposes.

So the saints are a nation that God has set apart for a sacred use. He hath set them apart to serve and glorify him, and to show forth his praise; to be vessels for their Master's use, to see the manifestations of God's glory, and eternally to ascribe the glory due to his name.

Secondly. They are holy by inherent holiness.

1. By holiness of heart.*

2. By holiness of life.*

IV. True Christians are God's peculiar people.

1. True Christians are God's peculiar people with respect to the value which he sets upon them. He values one true Christian more than all the wicked in the world. God puts a high value upon his saints; they are his jewels. God's high value of them appears in all the ways wherein persons are wont to show the great regard which they have for any possession. God keeps them as the apple of his eye, he will by no means lose one of his saints, not one of all the number shall fail, he will suffer no one to do them harm, his almighty power is thoroughly engaged for them to defend them.

The life, the happiness, and the welfare of the saints are precious in God's sight. He shows the higher value that he sets upon the godly than others, by giving the wicked for them, making them subservient to them, and destroying them when they stand in the way of the welfare of the godly. Prov. xxi. 18. "The wicked shall be a ransom for the righteous, and the transgressor for the upright."

Whenever the life or welfare of the wicked stands in the way of the welfare of the righteous, God is wont to procure the welfare of his people, though it be at the expense of the lives and welfare of never so many. Prov. xi. 8. "The righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead." Thus God manifested how much he valued the patriarchs. Though there were but very few of them, yet even kings were rebuked for their sakes. Psalm cv. 12, 13, 14, 15. "When they were but a few men in number: yea, very few, and strangers in it. When they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people. He suffered no man to do them wrong; yea, he reproved

* These two heads are not filled up.

kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." So he showed how he valued the children of Israel, in that he gave nations for them. Isai. xliii. 3, 4. "For I am the Lord thy God, the holy one of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life."

When the Egyptians stood in the way of the welfare of the church, God brought plagues upon them one after another, wherein he sorely distressed them. When their lives stood in the way, God destroyed all the first born of Egypt; and when Pharaoh and his host sought their destruction, he drowned them in the Red sea, and when the nations of Canaan stood in their way, God destroyed them; he destroyed many of them miraculously, by sending hail-stones from heaven upon them. God will sooner at one blow destroy all the wicked of the world than that one of his saints should be lost. There are many great men of the world, kings and princes, men of great power and policy, men of noble blood and honourable descent, men of great wealth, men of vast learning and knowledge in the world, that are honoured, and make a great figure, and great account is made of them in the world, who are wicked men and reprobates, and they all are not of so great value in God's sight as one true Christian, however humble his birth and low his standing; however poor, or ignorant, or unknown.

God has shown how highly he values his saints by several remarkable providences. He has often changed and intercepted the course of nature for their sakes. Nothing except God himself is more constant and unchangeable than the course and laws of nature; but yet so much doth God value his saints, that he did not think the procuring of their welfare too slight an occasion for stopping the sun in his course.

But above all hath God shown how great a value he sets upon his saints, by the great price which he has paid for them, the blood of his own Son. God values every saint so highly that he bought him with the blood of his own dear Son. There is no price of gold or silver that can be compared with the price of the blood of Christ.

2. They are his peculiar people with respect to the mercy that he bestows upon them. God bestows many mercies upon ungodly men; he is kind to the evil and the good, to the just and the unjust. He is good to wicked men in preserving their lives, in providing for their subsistence, and in giving them many comforts. Wicked men receive a great deal of goodness from God which they have cause to admire, and be thankful for every day, and but few live

any considerable time who are not the subjects of special influences of God's goodness to them in deliverance from trouble and danger. He heaps temporal good things upon them, he gives them wealth, and ease, and honour, and great prosperity. He distributes the world among them, and they show their great ingratitude in that, notwithstanding all God's bounty to them, they will not learn righteousness. Isaiah xxvi. 10. "Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness: in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord." Thus Samuel reproves Saul for his great ingratitude, that he took no more notice of the great kindness of God to him. 1 Sam. xv. 17. "And Samuel said, when thou wast little in thine own sight, wast not thou made the head of the tribes of Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?" So there are many other wicked men that are advanced to the state of princes and nobles.

But God bestows more goodness upon one godly man than upon all the ungodly in the world. Put all their preservations, all their deliverances, all their wealth, all their comforts that have been heaped upon them by providence together, those things are but trifles that God bestows on ungodly men; but they are peculiar blessings which he bestows on the righteous, they are precious things that God has in reserve for his own favourites, in comparison of which all earthly treasure is but dirt and dross. As for the saints, Christ has died for them, they have all their sins pardoned, they are delivered from a hell of eternal misery, they have a title to eternal life bestowed upon them, they have God's own image conferred on them, they are received into favour, and will enjoy God's everlasting love.

3. They are God's peculiar people with respect to the interest which he has in them. God has a peculiar interest in godly men; they are his peculiar property, they are his as they are redeemed by him, and as they have given themselves to him. God has an interest in godly men's hearts, they have a true love and respect to him; they have true honour to him. God has a greater interest in their hearts than any thing else, greater than the dearest friend on earth, greater than the world or any earthly enjoyment. They prefer God before all other things, they preserve the throne of their hearts for God, they are of a spirit to exalt him as the greatest and highest, to love him as the most excellent, to praise him as the most gracious and merciful.

God has no interest in the hearts of natural men. Many of them seem to show respect to him outwardly. The Pharisees of old pretended to an extraordinary devotion, to a great love to God. And many hypocrites in these times come before God as his people come, they seem as though they delighted to draw near to

God, and make a high profession of religion; but God has in deed no interest in their hearts. They give him the outward appearance, they give him the words of their lips, but their hearts are far from him. It is from respect to something else, and not to him; they have not the least love to God.

But God has an interest in the hearts of true Christians: however small and inconsiderable it is in comparison of what it ought to be, yet they are of a spirit to prefer God above all. He has an interest in them, and they offer up their bodies a living sacrifice to him; they serve and actively glorify him, with their bodies and with their spirits. God is glorified in wicked men, as they are occasions of the manifestations of his glory, or as he glorifies himself in them; but Christians devote themselves to serve and glorify God. Though it is but a small interest that God has in the hearts of Christians in this world in comparison of what ought to be, yet he hath a greater interest in one godly man than in all the ungodly and hypocrites that are in the world.

4. They are God's peculiar people, with respect to the complacence which he hath in them. God takes delight in his saints. Psalm xi. 7. "For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness: his countenance doth behold the upright." God doth as it were rejoice over a convert, he delights in beholding that beauty and those ornaments of mind which he hath given him; God takes delight in the graces of a godly man's heart, and he delights in the good works and religion of the Christian. Psalm xxxvii. 23. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighted in his way." God takes delight in the godly man's prayers. Prov. xv. 8. "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord: but the prayer of the upright is his delight." He takes more delight in the sincere humble devotion of one true saint, than in all the moral virtue and outward religion of all the natural men in the world. If the wicked that are rich should offer to God ten thousand sacrifices, or if they should devote ever so much of their substance to religious uses, if they should give all their goods to feed the poor; it would not be so acceptable to God, as one cup of cold water given by a saint with a spirit of true charity. Ungodly kings may do much in many respects for religion; they may build stately churches for the worship of God, they may encourage religion in their dominions by their power and influence. Cyrus, a a heathen prince, restored the people of God from captivity, and restored the state of the Jews. But God has a greater delight in the sincere worship and love of one poor, obscure, Christian, than in all that is done throughout the globe by irreligious kings and princes.

REFLECTIONS.

Hence it may well be expected of such as profess hopes of their being true Christians, that they should live after a peculiar manner, and be devoted to God for his use. There should be a great difference between their way of living and that of other men. Godly men should not be hurried away by the general example. If any evil practice is become a common custom, it may well be expected of those who profess themselves godly, that they should stem the stream of common custom and example, though they are despised for it.

Men are ready often to plead for their neglect of such and such duties, and the commission of such evils, that it is a *common custom.* "Who is there," say they, "but what does so? I should be singular if I did otherwise." But if evil things are common, God may well expect of them that their way should be singular and peculiar, for Christians are a peculiar people. There should be a difference and a great difference between them and the generality of the world; if their neighbours, and relations and companions, fall in with the common custom, that is evil, yet they should be peculiar, and stand alone.

It may well be expected that they should go further than other men in doing their duty, and practising the Christian religion. For instance, it is a common thing for men when they are affronted, or injured by their neighbours, to entertain a spirit of revenge, to drink in a spirit of ill will against their neighbour, and to wish him hurt. But Christians should be peculiar; they should forgive those that injure them, and not entertain any spirit of ill will to them upon that account.

It is common for men when injured, to endeavour to retaliate upon those that injure them in some way or other, either by acting or talking against them; but those who call themselves godly, should choose no kind of revenge, Matth. v. 38, 39. "Ye have heard, that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." The generality of men will love their friends, and hate their enemies; it is very rare that it is otherwise. Men pretend that they do not hate their enemies, but they really do in their hearts. But Christians should be peculiar in this matter, their way should be different from the way of the world; for they are a peculiar people, and they should love their enemies from their hearts, and do good to them that hate them. However rare it is that there is any such thing, yet such a rare thing very well becomes God's peculiar people. Matth. v. 43, 44, 45. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But

I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

It is a rare thing for persons to accustom themselves to great self-denial. Many will indeed deny themselves something for the sake of their duty, but if it very much crosses their interest, there are few that will be steadfast in their duty. But it may well be expected, that you should greatly deny yourself for the sake of God and Christ, and so be peculiar in this matter.

Self-interest governs the generality of men; they will mind their own interest rather than any thing else. But it may well be expected of those who profess godliness, that they should show themselves peculiar in this matter, and that they should sacrifice their private, separate interest to the glory and honour of God, and to the public good. Most men will content themselves and quiet their consciences by avoiding the more gross acts of sin, by avoiding an outward gratification of lusts; but it becomes Christians to distinguish themselves here, and avoid sinning so much as in their thoughts, not to indulge any lust so much as in their imagination.

It is a shame to professors of godliness that their light shines no brighter before men, that there is no more appearing in them of an amiable Christian spirit, that they do not seem to shine any brighter in their outward conversation than many other men that do not make the profession that they do. Many such men seem to be as exact, and as careful to avoid sin, and to deny themselves as they; yea, many, perhaps, that, for the outward practice of some particular virtues, shine brighter than they, are more liberal, and kind, more courteous and obliging in their behaviour.

It is expected of those that are of this peculiar people that they should do more than others. Matth. v. 46, 47. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" Let me then apply this subject immediately to those who are present.

1. Here is a powerful argument to persuade those of you who are impenitent to become godly, that if you will forsake your sins, and with all your heart turn to God, you shall become of the number of God's peculiar people. You shall have the same privileges with those that have been mentioned, you will immediately upon your conversion become one of those that God sets such an high value upon. If you are assured of your conversion, you may withal be assured that God the Supreme Lord of heaven and earth sets a higher value on you than upon all the reprobates in the world,

that God has set so high a value upon you that he has given the blood of his own Son for your ransom.

If you do savingly turn to God, you will receive from God mercies and blessings greater in value than all the wealth and outward prosperity of all the ungodly men in the world. Put all the honour and all the wealth of the great men of the world together; put all that the kings of the earth possess, their treasures and revenues, their dominions and power, their stately seats and palaces, their costly robes and dainties, together, and they will not amount to so great things as God will bestow upon you.

If you will turn from your sins and come to Christ, the great God will accept of you, and delight in you: you then will have those spiritual ornaments that will be more amiable in the sight of God, than all the learning, and knowledge, and morality of all the ungodly men in the world.

If you continue in a natural condition, God will make no account of you; instead of being as his jewels, you will be esteemed as vile and refuse, and fit for nothing but to be trampled under foot; instead of being gold, you will be esteemed as dross, Jer. vi. 30. "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them." Hereafter you will be thrown away as being good for nothing, you will be esteemed nothing worth, as is represented in that parable, Matth. xiii. 47, &c. "Again the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Yea, you shall not only be cast away as good for nothing, but shall be cast out as filth into the great receptacle of the filth of the world; you will be cast into a furnace of fire as barren branches are gathered up and burnt. John xv. 6. "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned; or as barren trees are cut down and cast into the fire. Matth. iii. 10. "And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire." As the tares were gathered together in bundles and burnt, you will be looked upon as fit for nothing else but to be destroyed. 2 Peter ii. 12. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption."

Instead of bestowing such peculiar mercies upon you, you in a little time will be stripped of all mercy. God will not have mercy

on you, but your miseries will be as dreadful as those mercies that God bestows on his saints are valuable. They are but trifles that wicked men have bestowed upon them while in this world, in comparison of what the righteous shall have. The blessings of one righteous are more in value than the enjoyments of all the wicked. But hereafter wicked men will not have those; they will have nothing but the fiery wrath and indignation of God for their portion.

While you are in a natural condition, instead of your being God's peculiar ones with respect to the interest which God hath in your heart, the devil has the greatest interest in your heart. He has the government and possession there, and therefore you are, and will be the devil's people, those that he claims, and those that will certainly fall to his share, at least if you continue in such a condition. Instead of being one in whom God has peculiar complacence, he has no pleasure in you; when you pretend to worship him, he has no delight in your hypocritical prayers and services, but they are an abomination to him.

II. If you are true Christians, then let God be peculiar with you.

1. Let God be your peculiar portion. If you are one of his peculiar people, he is so. All who are God's people have chosen him for their God and portion. Do this more, and more, and more. Let all other things be lightly set by, and treated by you with neglect, in comparison of God.

Let God be the object of your peculiar value and esteem. If God has made you one of those on whom he sets a peculiar value, you who are a poor worthless worm, if he has set such a value upon you, as to purchase you with the price of the blood of his Son, who are in yourself a filthy despicable creature, how much more reason is there that you should peculiarly value God, who is so great and glorious! It is fitting that this value should be mutual; and it is fitting that it should be in answerable degree.

It will be but a little thing for you to esteem God above all in comparison of what it is for God so to prize his saints. See to it therefore, that there be nothing that stands in any competition with God in your esteem; value him more than all riches; value his honour and glory more than all the world; be ready at all times to part with all things else, and cleave to God. Let God be your peculiar friend, and value his friendship more than the respect and love of all the world. When you lose other enjoyments, when you lose earthly friends, let this be a supporting, satisfying comfort to you, that you have not lost God.

2. Let God be your peculiar confidence. There is great encouragement in this Doctrine for you to make him so, and reason to enforce it as your duty. God expects that those who are his

peculiar people should put their trust in him, and well they may do so, for God has a peculiar favour for them, and is peculiarly careful and tender of them. Be sensible, therefore, that it is unbecoming any, but especially those who are so near to God, and so favoured by him, to trust in their own righteousness, or in any arm of flesh. The peculiar people of God should not trust in themselves, they should not trust in friends, they should not trust in great men, they should not trust in their estates, or in any worldly enjoyment as expecting happiness from it, but alone in the Lord God. He ought to be their refuge and hiding-place: in time of trouble they should hide themselves under the shadow of his wings.

3. Make God the peculiar object of your praises. The doctrine shows what great reason you have so to do. If God so values you, sets so much by you, has bestowed greater mercies upon you than on all the ungodly in the world; is it too little a requital for you to make God the peculiar object of your praise and thankfulness? If God so distinguishes you with his mercy, you ought to distinguish yourself in his praises; you should make it your great care and study how to glorify that God who has been so peculiarly merciful to you. And the rather because there was nothing peculiar in you, distinguishing you from any other person, that moved God to deal thus peculiarly by you. You were as unworthy to be set by as thousands of others that are not regarded of God, and are cast away by him for ever.

SERMON XIV.

APRIL, 1738.

HEBREWS xiii. 8.

Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

THE exhortation, which the Apostle gives the Christian Hebrews in the verse preceding this, is to remember and follow the good instructions, and examples of their ministers, "Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." The last part of this exhortation is to follow their faith. By following their faith, the Apostle seems to intend adhering to the Christian faith, and those wholsome doctrines which their pastors taught them, and not depart from them, as many in that day had done, to heretical tenets. And the enforcement of the doctrine is in these words, "Considering the end of their conversation, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever." Christ is the end of their conversation, he is the end of their conversation in their office, the end of the doctrines which they taught, and the end of all their administrations, and all their labours in all their work. And as he was so, they ought to follow their faith, or cleave steadfastly to the doctrines they had taught them, and not depart to other doctrines; for Jesus Christ was the same, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

If they still professed to be Christians or the followers of Jesus Christ, then they should still cleave to the same doctrines that they were taught in their first conversion; they should still follow the faith of them, who had first indoctrinated them in Christianity; for Jesus Christ was the same now that he was then, and therefore, Christianity was obviously the same thing. It was not one thing now and another when they were first converted, or even like to any other thing than it always had been. Surely therefore, when Christ and Christianity were thus unchangeable, he would therefore have them not fickle and changeable in their faith, not depart from their former faith, nor

be carried about with divers and strange doctrines, as it follows in the next verse.

When it is said that Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, by *yesterday* is meant *all time past;* by *to-day, the time present;* and by *for ever, all that is future*, from the present time to eternity.

Doctrine. Jesus Christ is the same now that he ever has been and ever will be.

Christ is thus unchangeable in two respects.

I. In his divine nature. As Christ is one of the persons of the Trinity, he is God, and so hath the divine nature, or the Godhead dwelling in him, and all the divine attributes belong to him, of which immutability or unchangeableness is one. Christ in his human nature was not absolutely unchangeable, though his human nature, by reason of its union with the divine, was not liable to those changes to which it was liable, as a mere creature; as for instance, it was indestructible and imperishable. Having the divine nature to uphold it, it was not liable to fall and commit sin, as Adam and the fallen angels did, but yet the human nature of Christ, when he was upon earth, was subject to many changes. It had a beginning; it was conceived in the womb of the Virgin; it was in a state of infancy, and afterwards changed from that state to a state of man hood, and this was attended not only with a change on his body, by his increasing in stature, but also on his mind; for we read that he not only increased in stature but also in wisdom. Luke ii. 52. And the human nature of Christ was subject to sorrowful changes, though not to sinful ones. He suffered hunger, and thirst, and cold; and at last he suffered dreadful changes by having his body tortured and destroyed, and his soul poured out unto death; and afterwards became subject to a glorious change at his resurrection and ascension. And that his human nature was not liable to sinful changes, as Adam's or the angels', was not owing to any thing in his human nature, but to its relation to the divine nature which upheld it. But the divine nature of Christ is absolutely unchangeable, and not liable to the least alteration or variation in any respect. It is the same now as it was before the world was created. It was the same after Christ's incarnation as before, when Christ was born in a stable, and laid in a manger, and underwent many changes on earth, and at last suffered that dreadful agony in the garden, and suffered on the cross; it made no real alteration in the divine nature; and afterwards when Christ was glorified, and sat on the right hand of the majesty on high, it made no alteration in his divine nature.

II. Christ is unchangeable in his office. He is unchangeable

as the Mediator and Saviour of his church and people. That unchangeableness of Christ in his office of Mediator, appears in several things.

1. This office never ceases to give place to any other to come in his room: Christ is the only Mediator between God and man, that ever has been or ever shall be. He is an everlasting Saviour. There have been typical mediators many, that have continued but a little while, and then have passed away, and others have come in their room; but the great antitype continues for ever. There have been prophets, that have been raised up, and these have died, and others have succeeded them. Moses was not suffered to continue by reason of death; and the dispensation which he introduced was abolished, to give place to another which Christ should introduce. Moses gives place to Christ, but Christ never gives place to any other. John the Baptist was a great prophet. He was Christ's forerunner; like the morning star, the forerunner of the sun, he shone bright a little while, but his ministry by degrees ceased, and gave way to the ministry of Christ, as the morning star by little and little goes out as the sun rises. John iii. 30. John the Baptist says, "He must increase, but I must decrease." But Christ's ministry never ceases. So the ancient legal priests, they had but a changeable and short-lived priesthood. Aaron died, and his son Eleazar succeeded in his room; and so there were many priests, one after another; but Christ continues a priest for ever. Heb. vii. 23, 24. And they truly were many priests; and they were not suffered to continue by reason of death; but Christ, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." These legal priests succeeded one another by inheritance; the father died and the son succeeded him, and then he died and *his* son succeeded him; but it is observed that Christ, in his priesthood, "is without father and without mother, without descent." He had no ancestor that went before him in his priesthood, or any posterity that should succeed him in it. In that respect, Melchizedeck is a type of Christ, of whom the scriptures give us an account, that he was a priest, but seems not to have been a priest by inheritance, as the sons of Aaron were: as Heb. vii. 3: "without father, and without mother, and without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life, but made like unto the Son of God, abideth a priest continually:" and therefore it is said of Christ, Psalm cx. 4, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedeck." Those things that appertain to Christ's priesthood are everlasting. The tabernacle at which the priests of old officiated, was a tabernacle that men pitched, and therefore a tabernacle that was taken down.

It was the holy of holies of old; but Christ is a minister of the true tabernacle and the true sanctuary which the Lord hath built, and not man. Heb. v. 2. The holy of holies he entered into was *heaven;* he is priest in a tabernacle, which shall never be taken down, and in a temple that shall never be demolished. So the altar on which he offers incense, the priestly garments or robes in which he officiates, are not of a corruptible nature. And so Christ is everlasting with reference to his kingly office. David and Solomon were great kings, and eminent types of Christ: but death put an end to their kingdom and greatness. Earthly monarchies that ever have been, those that have ruled over the bigger part of the known world, as particularly the Grecian and Roman monarchies, they have come to an end, but Christ's is an everlasting kingdom, his throne is for ever and ever. Heb. i. 8. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Though all other kingdoms shall be demolished, Christ's kingdom shall stand for ever." Dan. vii. 13, 14.

2. Christ is at all times equally sufficient for the office he hath undertaken. He undertook the office from eternity, and he was sufficient for it from eternity. He has been in the exercise of his office from the fall of man, and remains equally sufficient throughout all ages. His power and his wisdom, his love, his excellency, and worthiness, is at all times equally sufficient for the salvation of sinners, and for the upholding and glorifying of believers. He is for ever able to save, because he lives for ever. His life is an endless and unchangeable life. He is made not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life. Heb. vii. 16. He is at all times equally accepted as a Mediator in the sight of the Father, who is ever well pleased in him. He is always equally worthy and lovely in his eyes. He is daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. The sacrifice that he has offered, and the righteousness that he has performed, is at all times equally sufficient. His blood is as sufficient to cleanse away sin now, as when it was warm from his wounds.

3. He is now, and ever will be, the same that he ever has been, in the Disposition and Will which he exercises in his office. He is not changeable in his disposition, as men are that are called to any office or business, which causes them to appear and act very differently in their offices at some times, from what they do at others. But Jesus Christ is, in this respect, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He is ever disposed to execute his office in a holy manner. He ever has been, still is, and ever will be, disposed to execute it so as to glorify his Father, to discountenance sin, and to encourage holiness. He ever exercised the same grace

and mercy in his office. He undertook the office of a Mediator from eternity with delight. He then delighted in the thoughts of saving sinners, and he still delights in it; he never has altered from the disposition to accomplish it. When man actually fell and became a rebel and an enemy, an enemy to his Father and himself; still it was his delight to do the part of a Mediator for him. And when he came into the world, and came to his last agony; when the bitter cup that he was to drink was set before him, and he had an extraordinary view of it, so that the sight of it made "his soul exceeding sorrowful even unto death," and caused him to "sweat as it were great drops of blood;" still he retained his disposition to do the part of a Mediator for sinners, and delighted in the thoughts of it; so, even when he was enduring the cross, the salvation of sinners was a joy set before him. Heb. xii. 2. And he never alters from his readiness to receive and embrace all that do in faith come to him; he is always equally willing to receive such. His love is unchangeable; he loved from eternity: Jer. xxxi. 3: he loved with an everlasting love; and it will be to eternity. John xiii. 1. "Having loved his own he loved them unto the end."

4. Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, as to the End which he aims at in his office. His supreme end in it is the glory of God; as particularly in vindicating the honour of his majesty, justice, and holiness, and the honour of his holy law. For this end did he undertake to stand as a Mediator between God and man, and to suffer for men, viz. that the honour of God's justice, majesty, and law may be vindicated in his sufferings. And he also undertook the office to glorify the free grace of God; and his special end in his undertaking was the salvation and happiness of the elect. These two ends he has in his eye in all parts of the work of his office; and these two ends he unchangeably aims at. These he sought on entering into covenant with the Father from eternity. These he has sought from the beginning of the world to this time, and these he ever will seek. He does not sometimes pursue one end, and then alter his mind and pursue another; but he ever pursues the same ends.

5. Christ ever acts by the same Rules in the execution of his mediatorial office.[1]

The rules that Christ acts by, in the execution of his office, are contained in a two-fold covenant.

(1.) The Covenant of Redemption, or the eternal covenant that was between the Father and the Son, wherein Christ undertook to stand as Mediator with fallen man, and was appointed thereto of the Father. In that covenant, all things concerning Christ's execution of his mediatorial office, were agreed between

Christ and his Father, and established by them. And this covenant or eternal agreement, is the highest rule that Christ acts by in his office; and it is a rule that he never in the least departs from. He never does any thing, more or less, than is contained in that eternal covenant. Christ does the work that God gave him to do in that covenant, and no other: he saves those, and those only, that the Father gave him in that covenant to save; and he brings them to such a degree of happiness as was therein agreed. To this rule Christ is unchangeable in his regard; it stands good with Christ in every article of it, yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

(2.) Another covenant that Christ has regard to in the execution of his Mediatorial office, is that Covenant of Grace which God established with man. Though indeed this be less properly the rule by which Christ acts as Mediator, than the Covenant of Redemption, yet it may be called a rule. God does, as it were, make his promises which he makes to his creatures, his rule to act by: i. e. all his actions are in an exact conformity to his promises, and he never departs in the least degree from them, as is the case with man with regard to what they make the rule of their actions. Yet it is not a rule to God in the same sense as a rule is to a created agent, which must be considered as something antecedent to the purposes of the agent, and that by which his purposes are regulated. But God's promises are consequent on his purposes, and are no other than the expressions of them. And the covenant of grace is not essentially different from the covenant of redemption: it is but an expression of it: it is only that covenant of redemption partly revealed to mankind for their encouragement, faith, and comfort. And therefore the fact that Christ never departs from the covenant of redemption, infers that he will never depart from the covenant of grace; for all that was promised to men in the covenant of grace, was agreed on between the Father and the Son in the covenant of redemption. However, there is one thing wherein Christ's unchangeableness in his office appears: that he never departs from the promises that he hath made to man. There is the same covenant of grace in all ages of the world. The covenant is not essentially different now from what it was under the old testament, and even before the flood; and it always will remain the same. It is therefore called an everlasting covenant, Isaiah. lv. 3.

And as Christ does not alter his covenant, so he unchangeably fulfils it: he never departs in the least jot or tittle. Though he has given exceedingly great and precious promises to those that believe in him, he ever fulfils them all. Heaven and earth shall sooner pass away, than one jot or one tittle of his promises shall fail, till all be fulfilled. It is especially on account of his un-

changeableness with respect to his promises, that he styles himself, "*I am that I am*," and is called "Jehovah," Exod. iii. 14, and vi. 3. Christ revealed himself to the children of Israel, in their Egyptian bondage, by this name, to encourage the people that he would fulfil his promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

5. He is in many respects unchangeable in the Acts which he exercises in his office. He is unchangeable in his acceptance of those that believe in him, and never will reject them; and he is unchangeable in his complacency and delight in them. He is unchangeable in his intercession for his church and people. He ever lives to make intercession. Heb. vii. 25. His intercession before God in heaven is a continual intercession. It is a constant presentation of his will before the Father for the salvation and happiness of those that are his in the virtue of his blood. And as Christ is unchangeable in his intercession, so he is unchangeable in upholding and preserving those that are his, and ordering all things for their good, until they are brought to his heavenly glory. He is constant and unchangeable in taking care of them in all respects, and will hereafter receive them to a constant and unchangeable enjoyment of himself.

APPLICATION.

I. We learn from the truth taught in the text, how fit Christ was to be appointed as the surety of fallen man. Adam, the first surety of mankind, failed in his work, because he was a mere creature, and so a mutable being. Though he had so great a trust committed to him, as the care of the eternal welfare of all his posterity, yet, not being unchangeable, he failed, and transgressed God's holy covenant. He was led aside, and drawn away by the subtle temptation of the devil. He being a changeable being, his subtle adversary found means to turn him aside, and so he fell, and all his posterity fell with him. It appeared, therefore, that we stood in need of a surety that was unchangeable, and could not fail in his work. Christ, whom God appointed to this work, to be to us a second Adam, is such an one that is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and therefore was not liable to fail in his undertaking. He was sufficient to be depended on as one that would certainly stand all trials, and go through all difficulties, until he had finished the work that he had undertaken, and actually wrought out eternal redemption for us.

II. This truth may be well applied to the awakening of those who profess to be Christians, and this on several accounts. You may be hence assured that Christ will fulfil his threatenings, that he has denounced against unbelievers. There are many awful threaten-

ings, which Christ has denounced against wicked men. Christ has threatened wo to this wicked world; Matth. xviii. 17; and has declared concerning all, that do not believe, that they shall be damned. This is that, which Christ gave in charge to his disciples before his ascension, when he sent them forth to preach, and teach all nations. Mark xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned." So Christ declares that every tree, that bringeth not forth good fruit, shall be hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matth. vii. 18. And he has especially threatened an awful punishment to gospel sinners. He has declared that every branch in him that beareth not fruit shall be cut off and cast forth and gathered up and burnt; and that, however wicked men and false Christians may dwell among the godly, as tares grow among wheat, yet when the harvest comes, and the wheat is gathered into the barn, the tares shall be gathered into bundles, and burnt. Matth. xiii. 30. And in the explication of the parable, he says, that, at the day of judgment, "the Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them that do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire, where shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth," ver. 41, 42. So he declares in Matthew viii. 21, concerning those visible Christians that say to him, "Lord, Lord," and that do not do the will of his Father which is in heaven, that he will hereafter profess unto them, that he never knew them, and that he will say unto them, "Depart from me, ye that work iniquity;" and that those that build their house on the sand shall fall, and that great shall be their fall; and that such as these shall see many coming from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sitting down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of God, and themselves thrust out; and he teaches in his parables that unprofitable servants, and those that as professing Christians come to the gospel feast without the wedding garment, shall be bound hand and foot, and cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He often denounces wo on hypocrites; and threatens concerning such as begin a life of religion and do not finish, and are not thorough and persevering in it, that they shall come to shame; that those who are foolish virgins, that take their lamps and take no oil with them, shall at last be shut from the marriage when others enter in with the bridegroom, and that when they come to the door they shall find it shut, and shall cry, "Lord, Lord, open to us," in vain; and that, at the day of judgment, Christ shall separate the righteous from the wicked, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, setting the righteous on the right hand, and the wicked

on the left; and that he shall say to the wicked, "Depart, accursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" and that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment. And particularly he has threatened concerning them that have not a spirit of self-denial, that do not cut off a right hand or a right foot, nor pluck out a right eye, that they shall go with two hands, or two feet, or two eyes, into hell-fire, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And that those, that have not a spirit to sell all for his sake, and that do not in comparison of him hate father, and mother, and wife, and every earthly relative and earthly possession, shall not be acknowledged of him as his disciples. And concerning those, that are ashamed of religion before men, that of them will he be ashamed, before his Father and before the angels: and concerning those that are of a revengeful spirit, and not of a spirit of forgiveness, that they shall not be forgiven; and concerning all that are of a malicious spirit, and not of a spirit of Christian love and meekness, that are of an angry, wrathful and scornful disposition, that say to their brother, "Raca," or "Thou fool;" that they shall be in danger of everlasting punishment proportioned to the heinousness of their crimes. And concerning wordly-minded men he has declared, that 'tis impossible for those that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. Concerning such he has said, "Wo unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation; and wo unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger;" and concerning such as are addicted to carnal mirth and jollity, he says, "Wo unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep." And he has abundantly declared concerning gospel sinners, that their punishment shall be far more dreadful than that of the worst of the heathen; that it shall be more tolerable even for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them; and he has declared that those, that are once cast into hell, shall in no wise come out thence, until they have paid the uttermost farthing.

Such things as these did Christ threaten against the ungodly, when he was here upon earth. And by the doctrine of the text you learn, that he now is, and ever will be, the same that he was then. He has not at all altered, no, nor ever will; but these dreadful things, that he has threatened, he will surely fulfil. Christ was no more disposed to threaten, than to fulfil his threatenings. Christ is as holy, and his nature and will is as averse to sin now as ever it was; and he is as strictly just now as he was then.

Therefore, let no Christless person flatter himself, that, continuing such, he shall by any means escape punishment. Christ's threatenings are the threatenings of one, that is the same yester-

day, to-day, and for ever; and what he has threatened with his mouth, he will fulfil with his hands. When Christ appears at the day of judgment, and you shall stand at his bar to be judged, you will find him in judging, just what he was, and just what you find him in your bibles, in threatening.

III. The truth in the text may be applied by way of Reproof.

1. To those that have been heretofore under awakenings, but have now become senseless and careless. This doctrine shows your folly. You act as if Christ were altered, as though he were not now so dreadful a Judge, and his displeasure not so much to be feared, as heretofore. Time was, when you were afraid of the displeasure and wrath of Christ. You were afraid of the dreadful sentence from his mouth, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." And why is it so much otherwise with you now? Is not the wrath of this Judge as much to be dreaded now, as ever it was? Time was, when those threatenings, that Christ has denounced against sinners, were terrible things to you; and why do you make so light of them now? Is this your great Judge grown weaker than he was, and less able to fulfil his threatenings? Are you less in his hands than you were; or do you imagine that Christ is become more reconciled to sin, and has not such a disposition to execute vengeance for it as he had?

Time was, that you seemed to feel yourself to be in lamentable circumstances that you had not an interest in Christ, and to have a great mind to get an interest in him. You sought it, and prayed to God daily for it, and took considerable pains, and went and asked others, what you should do to obtain an interest in Christ. Why is it that you are so much more careless about it now? Is Christ altered; is an interest in him less valuable, or less necessary, now, than it was then? Was acceptance with him worth earnestly seeking, and praying, and striving for then, and is it good for nothing now? Did you stand in great need of it then, and can you do well enough without it now?

Time was when you seemed to be much concerned about your having been guilty of so much sin against God and Christ, and, it may be, wept about it in your prayers. But now, you are not concerned about it. The thought of your having so often and so greatly offended him, does not so much trouble you, but that you can be easy and quiet, and have your heart taken up about one vanity or another, without being very much disturbed with the thoughts of your sins. Then you used to be careful to avoid sin; you were watchful to avoid those things that were forbidden in God's holy word; you were careful that you did not sin by profaning the sabbath, or by unsuitably spending the time in God's house, or by neglecting the duties of

reading and prayer. You were careful of your behaviour among men, lest you should transgress. If you suspected any thing to be sinful then, you dared not do it. But now there is no such care upon your spirit, there is no such watch maintained, you have no such guard upon you. But when you are tempted to do or omit any thing, it is not a thought coming with weight upon your heart, "Is this sinful or not?" "Is this contrary to the mind and will of God, or not?" You do not dwell long on such kind of thoughts as these; you are grown very bold, and live in neglects and practices that are sinful, and that you have light enough to know to be so: just as if you thought that Christ's disposition, with respect to sin was altered; and that he was less an enemy to sin now than he was then. Instead of being less an enemy to sin than you then thought he was, and instead of being a less dreadful Judge of ungodly men, than you then imagined, or had a sense of in your heart, he is a thousand times more so: for then, when you was most awakened and convinced, you conceived but very little of what is in reality; you apprehended very imperfectly the enmity of Christ's nature against sin and the dreadfulness of his wrath against the ungodly. It was but a little sense you had of it. His wrath is infinitely more dreadful, than ever you have yet had any conception of.

And though Christ be unchangeable, yet you are not. You are changed for the worse, since the time when you were awakened. Christ is equally an enemy of sin, and you are become more sinful than you then were. Christ's wrath is in itself equally dreadful, as it then was; but you have far more reason to dread it, than you had then, for you are in much greater danger of it; and if you do not repent are much nearer to the execution of it. And not only so, but you are now exposed to much more of that wrath. Christ's wrath hung over your head then, and so it does now, but with this difference, that now much more of that wrath hangs over you than did then. You hung over the pit of hell then, and so you do now; but with this difference, that you have ever since been kindling and enraging the flames of that fiery gulf over which you hang, so that they are vastly fiercer than they were then; and the moth of time has been nibbling at that slender thread ever since, and has much nearer gnawed it off than it had then. And your heart is far more hardened than it was; and the devil has faster hold of you, and the way to escape is more blocked up; and your case upon many accounts is inexpressibly more doleful, however much more careless and unconcerned you are about your own circumstances.

2. This doctrine reproves all, that have entered into the bonds of the Christian covenant, and have proved false to it. If Christ be the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and is always the same towards us in fulfilling, as he is in promising, then surely we ought to be so towards him. If he never breaks covenant with his people, then they are greatly to be reproved, who are false and treacherous in their dealings with him. Therefore this reproves a covenant people that depart from Christ, and break covenant with him; as we in this land have done, having greatly revolted and degenerated both from the pure profession and religious practice of the first times of the country. Though Christ and his doctrine, and the religion that he taught, are always the same, yet this country has great multitudes in it that are driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and has now for a long time been exceedingly corrupted by the prevalency of many evil customs and practices.

And by this doctrine is every particular person reproved, that does not take care to keep covenant with Christ. We are in general under the solemn bonds of our baptismal covenant; and that covenant, that was sealed in our baptism, most of us have explicitly owned, and expressly and solemnly promised to walk in, in a way of obedience to all the commands of God as long as we live; and have, time after time, in the most solemn manner, sealed this covenant anew, by taking the body and blood of Christ upon it at the Lord's supper. They bring dreadful guilt on themselves who are not careful to fulfil such vows; they that have solemnly vowed to obey Christ in all his commandments as long as they live, and have sealed these vows by eating and drinking at the Lord's supper with far greater solemnity than if they sealed it with as many solemn oaths, yet live in ways of sin, live in the neglect of several commanded duties, and in the commission of forbidden sin; or at least do not make it the care of their lives strictly to keep Christ's commands; surely such persons render themselves very guilty.

3. This doctrine reproves those that have been seemingly pious, and have fallen away to ways of sin. Who these persons are, their own consciences are better able to judge than those that are about them. There are many here present, that in times past have been seemingly pious; and let every one inquire at the mouth of his own conscience, whether his seeming piety holds on; whether it be not come to an end. If you find reason, by a serious and strict examination, to conclude that you are one of them, consider how vile is your treatment of Him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, and who never is false to any to whom he once manifests his favour. How

greatly doth God complain of such short-lived religion in the scriptures! Hos. vi. 4. "O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew, it goeth away." Ps. lxxviii. 57. "They tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies, but turned back and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers; they were turned aside like a deceitful bow."

4. Hereby the truly godly are greatly to be reproved for their declension. There are many such here, as I charitably hope, and many of them I fear have been guilty of great declension in religion. Formerly they were lively and animated in religion, now they are dull and indifferent; formerly their hearts went up on high after God, but now after the world; they carried themselves for a while very exemplarily, but have since behaved in such a manner as to wound religion. Why will you be guilty of such a departure from your Redeemer, who changes not with regard to you? His love he formerly manifested towards you, but it does not change; it has ever held up to the same height; his faithfulness never has failed to you; why then does your love so languish towards him, and why are you so unfaithful to him? He keeps up the same care and watchfulness towards you, to preserve you, to provide for you, to defend you from your enemies, and why will you suffer your care and strictness to serve and please Christ, and honour him, to fail in any measure?

When you were first converted, your heart seemed to be wrapt up in love to Christ, and delight in him and his praises. You were then continually meditating on Christ and the things of Christ, and your meditations on him were sweet; and you were then much in speaking of those things, and you delighted to speak of them. And why is it so much otherwise with you now? Is Christ less excellent than he was then? is he less worthy of your love?

5. This doctrine affords matter of reproof to us of this town, for our declining is much from what we have lately been. That we have exceedingly declined in religion, is most manifest, and what all confess. A little while ago Christ was the great object of regard among us. The hearts of the people in general were greatly engaged about Christ; as though Christ had been all, and the world nothing. There was then a great deal of conversation, among all sorts of persons, and in all companies, of Christ. They who thought they had no interest in Christ, were full of concern how to obtain an interest in him; and they were almost ready to neglect their worldly concerns, as though

Christ was all they needed. And with regard to those that thought they had obtained an interest in Christ, their thoughts and their conversation seemed also to be very much taken up about Christ. They were much engaged in talking of the excellency of Christ, and seemed to be full of the grace and dying love of Christ. And one and another of you expressed the strong sense you had of one perfection and excellency and another of Christ, and of the glory of the works that he has done, and of the sweetness of the words that he speaks. The town seemed to be full of the praises of Christ. You expressed to one another how you earnestly longed to priase him and bless his name for ever and ever, and how you desired that others should help you praise him. The benefits procured by Christ were then greatly valued in the town, and both Christ and his benefits were then precious among us. And multitudes seemed to be concerned, what they should do for the honour of Chirst, how they should live to his glory and do something for the advancement of his kingdom in the world. But now, how much otherwise is it; how little is Christ set by, in comparison of what he has been; how much is he neglected, how much is he dropped out of people's common discourse and conversation! How have many of you left off earnestly following after Christ, to pursue after the world; one to pursue after riches, another to be engrossed by amusement and diversion; another by fine clothes and gay apparel; and all sorts, young and old, have gone their way wandering in a great measure from Christ: as though Christ was not as excellent now as he was then; as though his grace and dying love were not as wonderful now as they were then; as though Christ were not now as much preferable to the world, as worthy to be loved, and to be praised, to be thought of, and talked of; and as though he was not as worthy that we should be concerned to honour him, and live to his praise, as ever he was. If Christ be as much altered, as the town is altered, he is altered very much indeed. Are we so foolish as to think that he, that is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, is so much altered from what he was three years ago?

IV. The truth taught in the text may be applied by way of Encouragement.

1. To sinners, whose minds are burdened and exercised with concern about the state of their souls, to come to Christ, and put their trust in him for salvation. If Christ is now and ever will be the same that he ever was, then here is great encouragement for you to come to him, as will appear by considering two things.

First. How Christ has invited you to come to him, with promises that he will accept of you, if you do so. Christ in his word often invites those that are in your circumstances; whether we consider your circumstances as a lost sinner, or as a sinner under anxiety and concern about your condition. If we consider your circumstances merely as a lost sinner, Christ invites you; for he is often inviting and calling on sinners to come to him. Prov. viii. 4. "Unto you, O men, I call, and my voice is to the sons of men." And chapter ix. 4, 5; "Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither; and ye that want understanding, come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine that I have mingled." Rev. iii. 20. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." Rev. xxii. 17. "The Spirit and the Bride say, Come." Or if we consider your circumstances as a sinner burdened in your soul with concern about your condition; such are especially invited by Christ. Matth. xi. 28. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And Isaiah lv. 1. "Ho every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;" and John vii. 37, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink." That Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, shows what a joint encouragement these invitations are for you to come to Christ in two ways:

(1.) It shows that as Christ invited such sinners, when these invitations were spoken and penned, so he does now, for he is the same now that he was then; so that you are to look on the invitations that you find in your bible not only as invitations that were made then when they were first spoken or written, but that are made now. Christ makes them now as much as he made them then. Those invitations which proceeded out of Christ's mouth when he was on earth are made to you now as much as if they now this moment proceeded from Christ's mouth; for there is no alteration in Christ; he is the same as ever he has been; so that when you read or hear any of the invitations of Christ, you may look upon them as if they now came from his blessed lips.

(2.) It shows that if you come to Christ, he will surely prove to be the same in accepting that he is in inviting. Christ will be consistent with himself. He will not appear one way in calling and inviting you, and then another way in his treatment of you when you come to accept of his invitation. Christ will not appear with two faces, with a pleasant winning face in inviting, and with a frowning countenance in his treatment of persons that come at his call; for he is ever the same. You see that Christ is exceedingly gracious and sweet in his invitations; and he surely will be as gracious and sweet in his acceptance of you; if you close with his call. And then Christ does not

merely *invite*, he also *promises*, that if you accept of his invitation, he will not reject you. John vi. 37. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." He that is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, will be found the same in fulfilling, that he is in promising.

Secondly. How Christ has treated those that have come to him heretofore. Christ in times past has graciously received those that have come to him; he has made them welcome; he has embraced them in the arms of his love; he has admitted them to a blessed and eternal union with himself, and has given them a right to all the privileges of the sons of God; and he is the same still, that he has been heretofore. We have an account in scripture of many that came to him; we have an account in the history of Christ's life of many that accepted his calls, and we have an account in the book of the Acts of the Apostles, of multitudes that believed in him; but we read of none that ever were rejected by him. And we ourselves have seen many that we have reason to think Christ has accepted on their coming to him, many that have been great sinners, many that have been old hardened sinners, many that had been backsliders, and many that had been guilty of quenching the spirit of God. And he is the same still; he is as ready to receive such sinners now as he was then. Christ never yet rejected any that came to him: he has always been the same in this respect; he is so now; and so he surely will be still.

2. There is in this doctrine great encouragement to all persons to look to Christ under all manner of difficulties and afflictions; and that especially from what appeared in Christ when he was here. We have an account, in the history of Christ, of great numbers under a great variety of afflictions and difficulties, resorting to him for help; and we have no account of his rejecting one person who came to him in a friendly manner for help, under any difficulty whatever. But on the contrary, the history of his life is principally filled up with miracles that he wrought for the relief of such. When they came to him, he presently relieved them, and always did it freely without money or price. We never read of his doing any thing for any person as hired to it, by any reward that was offered him. And he helped persons fully, he completely delivered them from those difficulties under which they laboured. And by the doctrine of the text we learn that though he is not now upon earth, but in heaven, yet he is the same that he was then. He is as able to help, and he is as ready to help under every kind of difficulty. Here is great encouragement for persons who are sick to look to Christ for healing, and for their near friends to carry their

case to Christ; for how ready was Christ, when on earth, to help those that looked to him under such difficulties! and how sufficient did he appear to be for it; commonly healing by laying on his hand, or by speaking a word! And we read of his healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. Persons under the most terrible and inveterate diseases were often healed. And Christ is the same still. And here is great encouragement for mourners to look to Christ for comfort; for we read of Christ's pitying such; as in the case of the widow of Nain, Luke vii. 12, 13, &c. "And so he wept with those that wept, and groaned in spirit, and wept with compassion for Martha and Mary, when he saw their sorrow for the loss of their brother Lazarus, John xi. 32, &c. And he is the same still; he is as ready to pity those that are in affliction now as he was then.

And here is great encouragement for those that are exercised with the temptations of Satan; for how often do we read of Christ casting out Satan from those of whom he had the strongest possession! and Christ is the same still. And whoever are under spiritual darkness, from the consideration of their own sinfulness, have encouragement hence to look to Christ for comfort; for if they do so, he will be ready to say to them, as he did to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee;" for he is still the same that he was then.

V. The truth taught in the text may be applied by way of Consolation to the Godly. You may consider that you have in him an unchangeable Saviour, who, as he has loved you and undertaken for you from eternity, and in time has died for you before you were born, and has since converted you by his grace, and brought you out of a blind, guilty, and undone condition, savingly home to himself; so he will carry on his work in your heart; he will perfect what is yet lacking in you, in order to your complete deliverance from sin, and death, and all evil, and to your establishment in complete and unalterable blessedness. From the unchangeableness of your Saviour, you may see how he thinks of that chain in Rom. viii. 29, 30. "For whom he did foreknow them he also did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate them he also called, and whom he called them he also justified, and whom he justified them he also glorified." The Saviour has promised you very great and precious blessings in this world; and things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man conceived, in the world to come; and from his unchangeableness you may be assured that the things which he has promised he will also perform.

You may from this doctrine see the unchangeableness of his love; and therefore, when you consider how great love he seemed to manifest, when he yielded himself up to God a sacrifice for you, in his agony and bloody sweat in the garden, and when he went out to the place of his crucifixion bearing his own cross, you may rejoice that his love now is the same that it was then.

And so when you think of past discoveries which Christ has made of himself in his glory, and in his love to your soul, you may comfort yourself that he is as glorious, and his love to you is as great, as it was in the time of these discoveries.

You may greatly comfort yourself that you have an unchangeable friend in Christ Jesus. Constancy is justly looked upon as a most necessary and most desirable qualification in a friend; that he be not fickle, and so that his friendship cannot be depended on as that of a steady sure friend. How excellent his friendship is, you may learn from his manner of treating his disciples on earth, whom he graciously treated as a tender father his children; meekly instructing them, most friendlily conversing with them, and being ready to pity them, and help them, and forgive their infirmities. And then you may consider this doctrine, and how it thence appears that he is the same still that he was then, and ever will be the same.

From the unchangeableness of your Saviour, you may be assured of your continuance in a state of grace. As to yourself, you are so changeable, that, if left to yourself, you would soon fall utterly away; there is no dependence on your unchangeableness; but Christ is the same, and therefore, when he has begun a good work in you he will finish it; as he has been the author, he will be the finisher of your faith. Your love to Christ is in itself changeable; but his to you is unchangeable, and therefore he will never suffer your love to him utterly to fail. The apostle gives this reason why the saints' love to Christ cannot fail, viz. that his love to them never can fail.

From the unchangeableness of Christ you may learn the unchangeableness of his intercession, how he will never cease to intercede for you. And from this you may learn the unalterableness of your heavenly happiness. When once you have entered on the happiness of heaven, it never shall be taken from you, because Christ, your Saviour and friend, who bestows it on you, and in whom you have it, is unchangeable. He will be the same for ever and ever, and therefore so will be your happiness in heaven. As Christ is an unchangeable Saviour, so he is your unchangeable portion. That may be your rejoicing, that however your earthly enjoyments may be removed, Christ can never fail.

Your dear friends may be taken away and you suffer many losses; and at last you must part with all those things. Yet you have a portion, a precious treasure, more worth, ten thousand times, than all these things. That portion cannot fail you, for you have it in him, who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

SERMON XV.*

THE TRUE EXCELLENCY OF A GOSPEL MINISTER.

JOHN v. 35.

He was a burning and a shining light.

THAT discourse of our blessed Saviour we have an account of in this chapter from the 17th verse to the end, was occasioned by the Jews' murmuring against him, and persecuting him for his healing the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, and bidding him to take up his bed and walk on the sabbath day. Christ largely vindicates himself in this discourse, by asserting his fellowship with God the Father in nature and operations, and thereby implicitly showing himself to be Lord of the sabbath, and by declaring to the Jews that God the Father, and he with him, did *work hitherto*, or even to this time; i. e. although it be said that God rested on the seventh day from all his works, yet indeed God continues to work hitherto, even to this very day, with respect to his greatest work, the work of redemption, or new creation which he carries on by Jesus Christ, his Son. Pursuant to the designs of which work was his showing mercy to fallen men by healing their diseases, and delivering them from the calamities they brought on themselves by sin. This great work of redemption God carries on from the beginning of the world to this time; and his rest from it will not come till the resurrection, which Christ speaks of in the 21st and following verses: The finishing of this redemption as to its procurement, being in his own resurrection; and as to the application, in the general resurrection and eternal judgment, spoken of from ver. 20 to ver. 30. So that notwithstanding both the rest on the seventh day, and also the rest that Joshua gave the children of Israel in Canaan; yet the great rest of the Redeemer from his work, and so of his people with him and in him, yet remains, as the apostle observes,

* Preached at Pelham, August 30, 1744, at the ordination of the Rev. Mr. Robert Abercrombie, to the work of the gospel ministry in that place.

Heb. chap. iv. This will be at the resurrection and general judgment; which Christ here teaches the Jews was to be brought to pass by the Son of God by the Father's appointment, and so the works of God to be finished by him.

And inasmuch as this vindication was so far from satisfying the Jews, that it did but further enrage them, because hereby he made himself equal with God, Christ therefore refers them to the witness of John the Baptist; whose testimony they must acquiesce in, or else be inconsistent with themselves; because they had generally acknowledged John to be a great prophet, and seemed for a while mightily affected and taken with it, that God after so long a withholding the spirit of prophecy, had raised up so great a prophet among them—and it is concerning him that Christ speaks in this verse wherein is the text: "He was a burning and a shining light; and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light."

In order to a right understanding and improvement of the words of the text, we may observe,

1. What Christ here takes notice of in John, and declares concerning him, viz. that *he was a burning and a shining light.* He was a light to the church of Israel, to reveal the mind and will of God to them, after a long continued dark season, and after they had been destitute of any prophet to instruct them for some ages; he arose on Israel, as the morning star, the forerunner of the Sun of Righteousness, to introduce the day spring, or dawning of the gospel day, to give light to them that till then had sat in the darkness of perfect night, which was the shadow of death; to give them the knowledge of salvation; as Zacharias his father declares at his circumcision, Luke i. 76—79. "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the day spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."

And he was a burning light, as he was full of a spirit of fervent piety and holiness, being filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb, having his heart warmed and inflamed with a great love to Christ, being that *friend of the bridegroom, that stood and heard him, and rejoiced greatly because of the bridegroom's voice;* and was glad that Christ increased, though he decreased, John iii. 29, 30; and was animated with a holy zeal in the work of the ministry: He came in this respect, in the spirit and power of Elias; as Elias was zealous in bearing testimony against the corruption, apostacies, and idolatries of Israel in his day, so was John

the Baptist in testifying against the wickedness of the Jews in his day: as Elias zealously reproved the sins of all sorts of persons in Israel, not only the sins of the common people, but of their great ones, Ahab, Ahaziah, and Jezebel, and their false prophets; with what zeal did John the Baptist reprove all sorts of persons, not only the publicans and soldiers, but the Pharisees and Sadducees, telling them plainly that they were a generation of vipers, and rebuked the wickedness of Herod in his most beloved lust, though Herod sought his life for it, as Ahab and Ahaziah did Elijah's! As Elias was much in warning the people of God's approaching judgments, denouncing God's awful wrath against Ahab, Jezebel, and Ahaziah, and the prophets of Baal, and the people in general: So was John the Baptist much in warning the people to fly from the wrath to come, telling them in the most awakening manner, that the "axe was laid at the root of the tree, and that every tree that brought not forth good fruit should be hewn down and cast into the fire, and that he that came after him had his fan in his hand, and that he would thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner, and burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

John the Baptist was not only a burning but a shining light: He was so in his doctrine, having more of the gospel in his preaching than the former prophets, or at least the gospel exhibited with greater light and clearness, more plainly pointing forth the person that was to be the great Redeemer, and declaring his errand into the world, to take away the sin of the world, as a lamb offered in sacrifice to God, and the necessity that all, even the most strictly moral and religious, stood in of him, being by nature a generation of vipers; and the spiritual nature of his kingdom, consisting not in circumcision, or outward baptism, or any other external performance or privileges, but in the powerful influences of the Holy Ghost in their hearts, a being *baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

In this clearness with which he gave knowledge of salvation to God's people, John was a bright light, *and among them that had been born of women there had not arisen a greater than he.* In this brightness this harbinger of the gospel day excelled all the other prophets as the morning star reflects more of the light of the sun than any other star, and is the brightest of all the stars.

He also shone bright in his conversation, and his eminent mortification and renunciation of the enjoyments of the world; his great diligence and laboriousness in his work, his impartiality in it, declaring the mind and will of God to all sorts without distinction; his great humility, rejoicing in the increase of the honour of Christ, though his honour was diminished, as the brightness of the morning star diminishes as the light of the sun in-

creases; and in his faithfulness and courage, still declaring the mind and will of God, though it cost him his own life. Thus his light shone before men.

2. We may observe to what purpose Christ declares these things of John in the text, viz. to show how great and excellent a person he was, and worthy that the Jews should regard his testimony: Great are the things which Christ elsewhere says of John the Baptist, as in Matth. xi. 7—14. He speaks of him as a *prophet; and more than a prophet;* and one, *than whom, there had not risen a greater among them that had been born of women.* He observes how great and excellent a light he was in the text, to show the Jews how inexcusable they were in not receiving the testimony he had given of him; as you may see ver. 31, 32, 33.

Therefore that which I would observe from the text to be the subject of my present discourse is this:

It is the excellency of a minister of the gospel to be both a burning and a shining light.

Thus we see it is in Christ's esteem, the great Prophet of God, and Light of the world, Head of the church, and Lord of the harvest, and the great Lord and Master, whose messengers all ministers of the gospel are.

John the Baptist was a minister of the gospel; and he was so more eminently than the ancient prophets; for though God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake the gospel by them; yet John the Baptist was a great minister of the gospel in a manner distinguished from them. He is reckoned in scripture the first that introduced the gospel day, after the law and the prophets, Luke vi. 16. "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached." And his preaching is called the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, Mark i. 1. He came on that errand, to give knowledge of salvation to God's people, through the remission of their sins, (as his father Zacharias observes, Luke i. 77,) and to preach these glad tidings that the kingdom of heaven was at hand.

John being thus eminently a minister of the gospel, and a burning and shining light, being taken notice of by Christ as his great excellency, we may justly hence observe, that herein consists the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel.

I would by divine assistance, handle the subject in the following method.

I. I would show that Christ's design, in the appointment of the order and office of ministers of the gospel is, that they may be lights to the souls of men.

II. I would show what is implied in their being burning lights.

III. I would show what is implied in their being shining lights.

IV. I would show that it is the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel to have these things united in them, to be both burning and shining lights.

V. I would apply these things to all that Christ has called to the work of the gospel ministry, showing how much it concerns them earnestly to endeavour that they may be burning and shining lights.

VI. Show what ministers of the gospel ought to do that they may be so.

VII. Say something briefly concerning the duty of a people that are under the care of a gospel minister, correspondent to those things that Christ has taught us concerning the end and excellency of a gospel minister.

I. I would observe that Christ's design in the appointment of the order and office of ministers of the gospel was that they might be lights to the souls of men.

Satan's kingdom is a kingdom of darkness; the devils are the rulers of the darkness of this world. But Christ's kingdom is a kingdom of light; the designs of his kingdom are carried on by light; his people *are not of the night, nor of darkness*, but are *the children of the light*, as they are the children of God, who is *the Father of lights*, and as it were a boundless fountain of infinitely pure and bright light. 1 John i. 5. James i. 17.

Man by the fall extinguished that divine light that shone in this world in its first estate. The scripture represents the wickedness of man as reducing the world to that state wherein it was when it was yet without form and void, and darkness filled it. Jer. iv. 22, 23. "For my people is foolish, they have not known me: they are sottish children; and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no knowledge. I beheld the earth, and lo, it was without form and void; and the heavens, and they had no light." But God in infinite mercy has made glorious provision for the restoration of light to this fallen dark world; he has sent him who is the brightness of his own glory, into the world to be the light of the world. "He is the true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world," i. e. every man in the world that ever has any true light. But in his wisdom and mercy, he is pleased to convey his light to men by means and instruments; and has sent forth his messengers, and appointed ministers in his church to be subordinate lights, and to shine with the communications of his light, and to reflect the beams of his glory on the souls of men.

There is an analogy between the divine constitution and disposition of things in the natural and in the spiritual world. The wise Creator has not left the natural world without light; but in this our solar system has set one great light, immensely exceeding all the rest, shining perpetually with a transcendent fulness and strength, to enlighten the whole; and he hath appointed other lesser, subordinate, or dependent lights, that shine with the communications and reflections of something of his brightness. So it is in the spiritual world; there God hath appointed Jesus Christ as a Sun of Righteousness: the church of God has not the sun to be her light by day; nor for brightness does the moon give light to her, but the Lord is her everlasting light, and her God her glory. The new Jerusalem has no need of the sun, nor the moon; for the Lamb is the light thereof. And the ministers of Christ are, as it were, the stars that encompass this glorious fountain of light, to receive and reflect his beams, and give light to the souls of men. As Christ therefore is in scripture called the Sun, so are his ministers called stars. So are the twelve apostles, the chief ministers of the Christian church, called, Rev. xii. 1. "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars." And so are the ordinary ministers of the gospel called, Rev. i. 16, "And he had in his right hand seven stars." And ver. 20, "The mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks; the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches." Here also ministers of the gospel are implicity compared to those lamps that enlightened the temple at Jerusalem, upon the tops of the golden candlesticks: And more expressly in Zech. iv. 2. "I have looked, and behold a candlestick, all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon."

These lamps have all their oil from Christ, and are enkindled by his flame, and shine by his beams; and being thus dependent on him, they are near to him, and held in his right hand, that they may receive light from him, to communicate to others.

The use of a light is threefold; to discover, to refresh, and to direct.

The first use of a light is to discover things, or make them manifest. Without light nothing is to be seen. Eph. v. 13. "Whatsoever doth make manifest is light." Ministers are set to be lights to the souls of men in this respect, as they are to be the means of imparting divine truth to them, and bringing into their view the most glorious and excellent objects, and of leading them to, and assisting them in the contemplation of those things that angels desire to look into: the means of their obtaining that

knowledge is infinitely more important and more excellent and useful, than that of the greatest statesmen or philosophers, even that which is spiritual and divine: They are set to be the means of bringing men out of darkness into God's marvellous light, and of bringing them to the infinite fountain of light, that in his light they may see light: They are set to instruct men, and impart to them that knowledge by which they may know God and Jesus Christ, whom to know is life eternal.

Another use of light is to refresh and delight the beholders. Darkness is dismal: the light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is to behold the sun. Light is refreshing to those who have long sat in darkness: They therefore that watch and keep awake through a dark night, long and wait for the light of the morning; and the wise man observes, Prov. xv. 30, "That the light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart." Spiritual light is especially refreshing and joyful. Psalm xcvii. 11. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." They that see the light of Christ, the star that hath arisen out of Jacob, are refreshed and do rejoice, as the wise men that saw the star that showed them where Christ was, Matth. ii. 10. "And when they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy."

Ministers are set in the church of God to be the instruments of this comfort and refreshment to the souls of men, to be the instruments of leading souls to the God of all consolation, and fountain of their happiness: they are sent as Christ was, and as co-workers with him, to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, and to comfort all that mourn: They are to lead those that "labour and are heavy laden" to their true rest, and to speak a word in season to him that is weary: They are set to be ministers of the consolation and joy of the saints. 2 Cor. i. 24. "We have not dominion over your faith; but are helpers of your joy."

The third use of light is to direct. 'Tis by light that we see where to go: "He that walks in darkness knows not whither he goes," and is in danger of stumbling and falling into mischief. 'Tis by light that men see what to do, and are enabled to work; in the night Christ tells us no man can work. Ministers are set to be lights to men's souls in this respect also; as Zacharias observes of John the Baptist, Luke i. 79, "To guide our feet in the way of peace." Ministers have the record of God committed to them that they may hold that forth, which God has given to be to man as a light shining in a dark place, to guide them in the way through this dark world, to regions of eternal light. Ministers are set to be instruments of conveying to men that true wisdom spoken of Job xxviii. "Which cannot

be gotten for gold, nor shall silver be weighed for the price thereof; which cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire.

I proceed now to the

II. Thing proposed, viz. to show what is implied in a minister of the gospel's being a burning light.

There are these two things that seem naturally to be understood by this expression, viz. that his heart be filled with much of the holy ardour of a spirit of true piety; and that he be fervent and zealous in his administrations.

1. That his heart be full of much of the holy ardour of a spirit of true piety. We read of the power of godliness. True grace is no dull, inactive, ineffectual principle; it is a powerful thing; there is an exceeding energy in it; and the reason is, that God is in it; it is a divine principle, a participation of the divine nature, and a communication of divine life, of the life of a risen Saviour, who exerts himself in the hearts of the saints, after the power of an endless life. They that have true grace in them, *they live;* but not by their own life; *but Christ lives in them*: his Holy Spirit becomes in them a living principle and spring of divine life: the energy and power of which is in scripture compared to fire. Matth. iii 11. "I indeed baptize you with water; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." True piety is not a thing remaining only in the head, or consisting in any speculative knowledge or opinions, or outward morality, or forms of religion; it reaches the heart, is chiefly seated there, and burns there. There is a holy ardour in every thing that belongs to true grace: true faith is an ardent thing, and so is true repentance; there is a holy power and ardour in true spiritual comfort and joy; yea, even in true Christian humility, submission and meekness. The reason is, that divine love or charity is the sum of all true grace, which is a holy flame enkindled in the soul: It is by this therefore especially, that a minister of the gospel is a *burning light;* a minister that is so has his soul enkindled with the heavenly flame; his heart burns with love to Christ, and fervent desires of the advancement of his kingdom and glory: and also with ardent love to the souls of men, and desires for their salvation.

2. The inward holy ardour of his soul is exercised and manifested in his being *zealous and fervent in his administrations:* for, he is a *burning light:* which implies that his spiritual heat and holy ardour is not for himself only, but is communicative and for the benefit of others: he is ardent, as he is a *light*, or in the performance of the duties of that office wherein he is set to be a light in the church of Christ. His fervent zeal, which has its

foundation and spring in that holy and powerful flame of love to God and man, that is in his heart, appears in the fervancy of his prayers to God, for and with his people; and in the earnestness and power with which he preaches the word of God, declares to sinners their misery, and warns them to fly from the wrath to come, and reproves, and testifies against all ungodliness; and the unfeigned earnestness and compassion with which he invites the weary and heavy laden to their Saviour; and the fervent love with which he counsels and comforts the saints; and the holy zeal, courage, and steadfastness, with which he maintains the exercise of discipline in the house of God, notwithstanding all the opposition he meets with in that difficult part of the ministerial work; and in the diligence and earnestness with which he attends every duty of his ministerial function, whether public or private.

But I hasten to the

III. Thing proposed in the handling of this subject, viz. To show what is implied in a minister's being *a shining light.*

There are three things that seem to be naturally signified by it.

1. That he be *pure, clear, and full in his doctrine.* A minister is set to be a light to men's souls, by teaching, or doctrine: and if he be a shining light in this respect, the light of his doctrine must be bright and full; it must be pure without mixtures of darkness, and therefore he must be sound in the faith, not one that is of a reprobate mind; in doctrine he must show uncorruptness; otherwise his *light* will be darkness: He must not lead his people into errors, but teach them the truth only, guiding their feet into the way of peace, and leading them in the right ways of the Lord.

He must be one that is *able to teach;* not one that is raw, ignorant, or unlearned, and but little versed in the things that he is to teach others; *not a novice* or one that is *unskilful* in *the word of righteousness;* he must be one that is well studied in divinity, well acquainted with the written word of God, mighty in the scriptures, and able to instruct and convince gainsayers.

And in order to be a *shining light* he must be one that really knows what religion is; one that is truly acquainted with that Saviour and way of salvation, that he is to teach to others, that he may *speak the things that he knows, and testify the things that he has seen,* and not be a blind leader of the blind: He must be one that is acquainted with experimental religion, and not ignorant of the inward operations of the Spirit of God, nor of Satan's devices; able to guide souls under their particular difficulties. Thus he must be *a scribe well instructed in things that pertain to the kingdom of God;* one *that brings forth out of his treasures, things new and old.*

And in order to his being a *shining light*, his doctrine must be *full*, he must not only be able to teach, but apt to teach, ready to instruct the ignorant, and them that are out of the way, and diligent in teaching, in public and private; and careful and faithful to declare the whole counsel of God, and not keep back any thing that may be profitable to his hearers.

Also his being a *shining light* implies that his instructions are clear and plain, accommodated to the capacity of his hearers, and tending to convey light to their understandings.

2. Another thing requisite in order to a minister's being a *shning light*, is that he be *discreet in all his administrations*. The fervent zeal that thus should animate and actuate him in his administrations should be regulated by discretion: He should not only be knowing, and able to communicate knowledge and formed to do it; but also wise, and know how to conduct himself in the house of God, as a wise builder, and a wise steward. And as he is one that God hath sent forth to labour in his field, and committed the care of his vineyard to, so he should conduct himself there as one *whom his God doth instruct to discretion*: He should not only be as *harmless as a dove*, but as *wise as a serpent;* showing himself a *workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth;* and one that *knows how to govern the church of God*, and to *walk in wisdom towards those that are without.*

3. Another thing implied in a minister's being a *shining light*, is that he *shines in his conversation:* If he shines never so much in his doctrine and administrations in the house of God, yet if there be not an answerable brightness in his conversation, it will have a tendency to render all ineffectual. Christ, in Matth. v. 14, 15, 16, says to his disciples (having undoubtedly a special respect to those of them that were to be sent forth to preach the gospel) "Ye are the light of the world:—Men do not light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick, and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." And how does Christ direct them to give light to others? "Let your light," says he, "so shine before men, that others seeing your *good works*, may glorify your Father which is in heaven." And he tells the same disciples again, John xv. 8, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." And how should they bring forth fruit? Christ tells them, verse 10, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love," and verse 14, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you."

God sent his Son into the world to be the light of the world these two ways, viz. By revealing his mind and will to the world, and also by setting the world a perfect example. So

ministers are set to be lights, not only as teachers, but as ensamples to the flock, 1 Peter v. 3.

The same things that ministers recommend to their hearers in their doctrine, they should also show them an example of in their practice. Thus the apostle says to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 11, "These things command and teach;" and then adds in the next verse, "Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." So he directs Titus, in his teaching, to recommend sobriety, gravity, temperance, patience, and other virtues, in the beginning of the 2d chapter of Titus. But then adds in the 7th verse, "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works."

We see in natural bodies, that when heat is raised in them to a high degree, at length they begin to shine: And, as I observed before, a principle of true grace in the soul is like an inward heat, an holy ardour of an heavenly fire enkindled in the soul: This in ministers of the gospel ought to be to that degree, as to shine forth brightly in all their conversation; and there should as it were be a light about them wherever they go, exhibiting to all that behold them, the amiable, delightful image of the beauty and brightness of their glorious master.

I proceed to the

IV. Thing proposed, which is to show that the excellency of a minister of the gospel consists in his being thus *both a burning and a shining light.*

This is manifest in two things:

1. Herein his ministry is acceptable and amiable in the sight of God and men.

When light and heat are thus united in a minister of the gospel, it shows that each is genuine, and of a right kind, and that both are divine. Divine light is attended with heat; and so, on the other hand, a truly divine and holy heat and ardour is ever accompanied with light.

It is the glory of the sun that such a bright and glorious light, and such a powerful, refreshing, vivifying heat, are both together diffused from that luminary. When there is light in a minister, consisting in human learning, great speculative knowledge and the wisdom of this world, without a spiritual warmth and ardour in his heart, and a holy zeal in his ministrations, his light is like the light of an *ignus fatuus*, and some kinds of putrifying carcases that shine in the dark, though they are of a stinking savour.. And if on the other hand a minister has warmth and zeal, without light, his heat has nothing excellent in it, but is rather to be abhorred; being like the heat of the bottomless pit; where, though the fire be great, yet there is no light. To be hot in this manner, and not lightsome, is to

be like an angel of darkness. But ministers by having light and heat united in them, will be like the angels of light; which for their light and brightness are called morning stars. Job xxviii. 7. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." And because of that holy ardour of divine love and zeal with which they burn, they are compared to a flaming fire. Psal. civ. 4. "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire," and are therefore called seraphims, which is a word that is derived from a root that signifies *to burn.* So that by ministers of the gospel being *burning and shining lights*, the *angels of the churches* will become like the *angels of heaven*, and those stars held in the right hand of Christ here below, will be like those morning stars above, and which is much more, hereby ministers will be like their glorious Lord and Master; who is not only the Master of ministers of the gospel, but is the head and Lord of the glorious angels, whom they adore, and who communicates to them the brightness in which they shine, and the flame with which they burn, and is the glorious luminary and sun of the heavenly world, from whence all the inhabitants of that world have their light and life, and all their glory. In this Sun of Righteousness is that light, whose brightness is such that the light of the sun in the firmament in comparison of it is as darkness, yea, *black as sackcloth of hair:* For he is the infinite brightness of God's glory; and of him it is said, Isai. xxiv. 23, "Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, before his ancients, gloriously." And accompanying this bright light in him, is the infinitely intense flame of love. There is no love to be compared to his; nor ever was love both to God and man so manifested, as has been in what Christ has done and suffered; for *herein was love!* Ministers, by being burning and shining lights, become the sons of God, of whom we read that he *is light*, and that he *is love.* 1 John i. 5. "This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that *God is light*, and in him is no darkness at all." And chap. iv. 16. "And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us: *God is love*, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

Therefore it must needs be that ministers, by being burning and shining lights, are acceptable and amiable in the sight of God, as he delights in his own image and in the image of his Son: And hereby also they will be honourable and amiable in the sight of men, all such as have any sense of that which is truly excellent and beautiful; and it is the way to have their

ministry pleasant and delightful to those of this character that sit under it.

2. Herein a minister of the gospel will be likely to answer the ends of his ministry: By this means his ministry will not only be amiable, but profitable. If a minister has light without heat, and entertains his auditory with learned discourses, without a savour of the power of godliness, or any appearance of fervency of spirit, and zeal for God and the good of souls, he may gratify itching ears, and fill the heads of his people with empty notions; but it will not be very likely to reach their hearts, or save their souls. And if, on the other hand, he be driven on with a fierce and intemperate zeal, and vehement heat, without light, he will be likely to kindle the like unhallowed flame in his people, and to fire their corrupt passions and affections; but will make them never the better, nor lead them a step towards heaven, but drive them apace the other way.

But if he approves himself in his ministry, as both a burning and a shining light, this will be the way to promote true Christianity amongst his people, and to make them both wise, good, and cause religion to flourish among them in the purity and beauty of it.

When divine light and heat attend each other in ministers of the gospel, their light will be like the beams of the sun, that do not only convey light, but give life; and converts will be likely to spring up under their ministry, as the grass and the plants of the field under the influences of the sun; and the souls of the saints will be likely to grow, and appear beautiful *as the lily*, and to *revive as the corn, and grow as the vine, and their scent to be as the wine of Lebanon;* and their light will be like the light of Christ, which is the light of life, John viii. 12.

If the sun should shine upon the earth, with the same brightness that it doth now, yet if it were without any heat, it would give life to nothing; the world be a desolate wilderness, with nothing growing in it; the death of every living thing must be the consequence; and the sun's light could be of no service to us, but to cause us to see our own and others' misery, without being able to help ourselves or them. On the other hand, if the sun diffused the same heat that now it does, but the world was destitute at the same time of any light, it would be equally unserviceable: Mankind having no light to guide them in their business, in tilling the field, or gathering the produce of the earth, we should be like the Egyptians in the three days' darkness, who saw not one another, nor rose from their place: And thus also death would be the unavoidable consequence. But by light and heat accompanying one another, the whole face of the earth becomes fruitful, and is adorned, and all things are

quickened and flourish, and mankind enjoy both life and comfort.

I proceed to the

V. Thing proposed in handling the doctrine, to apply these things to all here present, that Christ has called to the work of the gospel ministry, observing how much it concerns such to endeavour to be burning and shining lights.

Our office and work is most honourable, in that we are set by Christ to be lights or luminaries in the spiritual world. Light is the most glorious thing in the material world, and there are, it may be, no parts of the natural world that have so great an image of the goodness of God, as the lights or luminaries of heaven; and especially the sun, who is constantly communicating his benign influence to enlighten, quicken, and refresh the world by his beams; which is probably the reason that the worship of the sun was (as is supposed) the first idolatry that mankind fell into. But so are ministers honoured by their great Lord and master, that they are set to be that to men's souls, that the lights of heaven are to their bodies; and that they might be the instruments and vehicles of God's greatest goodness, and the most precious fruits of his eternal love to them, and means of that life, and refreshment and joy, that are spiritual and eternal, and infinitely more precious than any benefit received by the benign beams of the sun in the firmament. And we shall be likely indeed to be the instruments of those unspeakable benefits to the souls of our fellow-creatures, if we have those qualifications, which have been shown to be the true and proper excellency of ministers of the gospel. Herein our glory will answer the honourable station Christ has set us in. And hereby our ministry will be likely to be as beneficial as our office is honourable: We shall be like Christ, and shall shine with his beams; Christ will live in us, and be seen in his life and beauty in our ministry, and in our conversation, and we shall be most likely to be the means of bringing others to him, and of their receiving of his light, and being made partakers of his life, and having his joy fulfilled in them. And this will be the way for us hereafter to be as much advanced and distinguished in our reward, as we are honoured in the office and business we are called to here. In this way, those whom Christ has set to be lights in his church, and to be stars in the spiritual world here, shall be lights also in the church triumphant, and shine as stars for ever in heaven. Daniel xii. 3. "And they that be wise, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness, as the stars for ever and ever."

But if we fail of the proper excellency of ministers of the gospel, we shall not be in the sight of God the more worthy or honourable for our high office, but the more abominable and inexcusable; our wickedness being aggravated by God's great goodness and condescension to us, and the peculiar obligations that he laid upon us; and instead of being eminently beneficial and great blessings, as lights to reflect the beams of Christ's glory and love, we shall be so much the more hurtful and pernicious, for our being in such a station; and so shall be likely hereafter to suffer a so much more dreadful punishment. The devils in hell are so much the more odious to God, and more the objects of his wrath, because he set them in the dignity and glory of angels, the excellency of which state they are fallen from. And it is likely that those in hell that will be nearest to the fallen angels, in their state of misery, will be those that Christ once set to be angels of the churches, but through their unfaithfulness, failed of their proper excellency and end.

Here I would apply myself in a few words to the person whose intended ordination, this day, to the great work of the gospel ministry, is the occasion of this discourse.

You have now, dear sir, heard something of the nature and design of that office to which you are this day, in the name of Christ, to be solemnly set apart. You are therein called to be a light to the souls of men, a lamp in God's temple, and a star in the spiritual world. And you have heard wherein, in Christ's esteem, consists the proper excellency of one in that office, and how in this a minister of the gospel becomes, like his glorious master, and glorifies him, and is likely to be the instrument of the salvation and happiness of the souls of men, and to receive a glorious reward from the hands of God.

These, sir, are the motives that you are to be influenced by, to endeavour to be a burning and a shining light in the work of the ministry. As to the things of this world, you are not to expect outward ease, pleasure and plenty: Nor are you to depend on the friendship and respect of men; but should prepare to endure hardness, as one that is going forth as a soldier to war. But they are higher things than these, more excellent benefits than the world can afford, that Christ offers to those that approve themselves to him in this work.

God in his providence has brought you far from your native land, and from your friends and acquaintance there; but you will have reason notwithstanding, to acknowledge the good hand of his providence towards you, if he is pleased to make you a burning and shining light in this part of his church, and by the influence of your light and heat (or rather by his divine influence with your ministry) to cause this wilderness to bud and blossom

as the rose, and give it the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, and to cause you to shine in the midst of this people with warm and lightsome, quickening and comforting beams, causing their souls to flourish, rejoice and bear fruit like a garden of pleasant fruits, under the beams of the sun.

By this means you will be to their souls the vehicle of the influences and blessings of the heavenly world, which is a world of light and love, shall be ever held in Christ's right hand, and shall be terrible to the powers of darkness; and shall see more and more of the light of Christ's glory and grace in this place, with you and this people, and shall hereafter not only shine yourself, as the brightness of the firmament, but shall meet with them in glory also, who shall shine there around you, as a bright constellation in the highest heaven; where they shall be your everlasting crown of rejoicing.

But I hasten to the

VI. Thing proposed, which was to show what course ministers of the gospel ought to take, or what things they should do, that they may be burning and shining lights.

And here I shall but just mention things, without enlarging.

And in order to this, ministers should be diligent in their studies, and in the work of the ministry to which they are called; giving themselves wholly to it; taking heed to themselves, that their hearts be not engaged, and their minds swallowed up, and their time consumed, in pursuits after the profits and vain glory of the world.

And particularly, ministers should be very conversant with the holy scriptures; making it very much their business, with the utmost diligence and strictness, to search those holy writings: For they are as it were the beams of the light of the sun of righteousness; they are the light by which ministers must be enlightened, and the light they are to hold forth to their hearers; and they are the fire whence their hearts and the hearts of their hearers must be enkindled.

They should earnestly seek after much of the spiritual knowledge of Christ, and that they may live in the clear views of his glory. For by this means they will be changed into the image of the same glory and brightness, and will come to their people as Moses came down to the congregation of Israel, after he had seen God's back parts in the mount, with his face shining. If the light of Christ's glory shines upon them, it will be the way for them to shine with the same kind of light on their hearers, and to reflect the same beams, which have heat, as well as brightness. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, is the treasure the apostle speaks of, that ministers have, as in earthen vessels: 2 Cor. iv. 6, 7. "For

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness hath shined into your hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels." This was probably typified of old, by the burning lights and lamps which Gideon's soldiers had in one hand in earthen pitchers, while they held a trumpet in the other, with which they sounded, (typifying the preaching of the gospel.) And thus with the sound of these trumpets, and these burning lights or earthen vessels, they overcame the enemies of God and his people.

Ministers, in order to their being burning and shining lights, should walk closely with God, and keep near to Christ; that they may ever be enlightened and enkindled by him. And they should be much in seeking God, and conversing with him by prayer, who is the fountain of light and love: And knowing their own emptiness and helplessness should be ever dependent on Christ; being sensible with Jeremiah that they are children, should sit as children at Christ's feet to hear his word, and be instructed by him; and being sensible with Isaiah that they are men of unclean lips, should seek that their lips may be, as it were, touched with a live coal from the altar, as it were by the bright and burning seraphim.

I come now to the

VII. And last thing proposed, to say something very briefly concerning the duties of a people that are under the care of a minister corresponding with these things that Christ has taught us concerning the nature and end of this sacred office. And here I would have a special respect to the people of God in this place, who are about to have the care of their souls, committed to him, that is now solemnly to be set apart to the work of the ministry.

If it be, as you have heard, the proper excellency of a minister of the gospel to be a burning and a shining light, then it is your duty earnestly to pray for your minister, that he may be filled with divine light, and with the power of the Holy Ghost, to make him so. For herein you will but pray for the greatest benefit to yourselves; for if your minister burns and shines, it will be for your light and life. That which has been spoken of, as it is the chief excellency of a minister, so it renders a minister the greatest blessing of any thing in the world that ever God bestows on a people.

And as it is your duty, to pray that your minister may by this mean become such a blessing to you, so you should do your part to make him so, by supporting him, and putting him under the best advantage, with a mind free from worldly cares, and the pressure of outward wants and difficulties, to give himself

wholly to his work; and by all proper acts of respect, and kindness and assistance, to encourage his heart, and strengthen his hands: And to take heed that instead of this you do not take a course to obscure and extinguish the light that would shine among you, and to smother and suppress the flame, by casting dirt upon it; by necessitating your minister by your penuriousness towards him, to be involved in worldly care; and by discouraging his heart by disrespect and unkindness. And particularly when your minister shows himself to be a burning light by burning with a proper zeal against any wickedness that may be breaking out amongst his people, and manifests it by bearing a proper testimony against it in the preaching of the word, or by a faithful exercise of the discipline of God's house, instead of taking it thankfully, and yielding to him in it, as you ought, does not raise another fire of a contrary nature against it, viz. the fire of your unhallowed passions, reflecting upon and reproaching him for his faithfulness. Herein you will act very unbecoming a Christian people, and show yourselves very ungrateful to your minister, and to Christ who has bestowed upon you so faithful a minister, and will also, while you fight against him, and against Christ, fight most effectually against your own souls. If Christ gives you a minister that is a burning and shining light, take heed that you do not hate the light, because your deeds are reproved by it; but love and rejoice in his light; and that not only for a season, like John the Baptist's apostatizing hearers: And come to the light. Let your frequent resort be to your minister for instruction in soul cases, and under all spiritual difficulties; and be open to the light and willing to receive it; and be obedient to it. And thus walk as the children of light, and follow your minister wherein he is a follower of Christ, i. e. wherein he is as a burning and shining light. If you continue so to do your path will be the path of the just, which shines more and more to the perfect day, and the end of your course shall be in those blissful regions of everlasting light above, where you shall shine forth with your minister, and both with Christ, *as the sun, in the kingdom of the heavenly Father.*

SERMON XVI.*

CHRIST THE EXAMPLE OF MINISTERS.

JOHN xiii. 15, 16.

For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him.

WE have in the context, an account of one of the many very remarkable things that passed that night wherein Christ was betrayed (which was on many accounts the most remarkable night that ever was) viz. Christ's washing his disciples' feet; which action, as it was exceeding wonderful in itself, so it manifestly was symbolical, and represented something else far more important and more wonderful, even that greatest and most wonderful of all things that ever came to pass, which was accomplished the next day in his last sufferings. There were three symbolical representations given of that great event this evening; one in the passover, which Christ now partook of with his disciples; another in the Lord's supper, which he instituted at this time; and another in this remarkable action of his washing his disciples' feet. Washing the feet of guests was the office of servants, and one of their meanest offices: And therefore was fitly chosen by our Saviour to represent that great abasement which he was to be the subject of in the form of a servant, in becoming obedient unto death, even that ignominious and accursed death of the cross, that he might cleanse the souls of his disciples from their guilt and spiritual pollution.

This spiritual washing and cleansing of believers was the end for which Christ so abased himself for them. Tit. ii. 14. "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all

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iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people." Eph. v. 25, 26. "Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water." That Christ's washing his disciples' feet signified this spiritual washing of the soul, is manifest by his own words in the 8th verse of the context. "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Christ, in being obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, not only did the part of a servant unto God, but in some respects also of a servant unto us. And this is not the only place where his so abasing himself for our sakes is compared to the doing of the part of a servant to guests. We have the like representation made in Luke xxii. 27. "For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." And wherein Christ was among the disciples as he that did serve, is explained in Matth. xx. 28, namely, in *his giving his life a ransom for them.*

When Christ had finished washing his disciples' feet, he solemnly requires their attention to what he had done, and commands them to follow his example therein. Verses 12—17. "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done unto you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet: For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord, neither he that is sent, greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

When our Saviour calls on his disciples to imitate the example he had given them in what he had done, we are to understand him, not merely by the example he gave in the emblematical action, in washing his disciples' feet, in itself considered; but more especially, of that much greater act of his that was signified by it, in abasing himself so low, and suffering so much, for the spiritual cleansing and salvation of his people.

This is what is chiefly insisted on as the great example Christ has given us to follow: So it is once and again afterwards, in the discourse Christ had with his disciples, this same night, verse 34, of the chapter wherein is the text: "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." Chap. xv. 12, 13. "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." And so in 1 John iii. 16. "Hereby

perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

Christ, in the words of the text, does not only intend to recommend this example of his to the disciples as Christians, or some of his professing people, but especially as his ministers. This is evident by those words he uses to enforce this counsel, "Neither he that is sent, is greater than he that sent him." In which words he manifestly has respect to that great errand on which he had sent them, when he bid them *go and preach the gospel to the lost sheep of the House of Israel.* Matth. x. 5, 6, and on which they were to be sent after his resurrection, when he said to them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." The same errand that Christ has respect to John xx. 21. "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

And what confirms this is, that Christ elsewhere recommends to officers in his church, that are in that respect chief among his followers, the example which he set in his abasing himself to be as a servant that ministers to guests at a table, in his giving his life for us; Matth. xx. 27, 28. "Whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Compare Luke xxii. 25—28.

The work and business of ministers of the gospel is as it were that of servants, to wash and cleanse the souls of men: For this is done by the preaching of the word, which is their main business, Eph. v. 26. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word."

The words of the text thus considered, do undoubtedly lead us to this conclusion, and teach us this doctrine, viz.

That it is the duty of ministers of the gospel, in the work of their ministry, to follow the example of their great Lord and Master.

And this is what I would by divine assistance make the subject of my present discourse.

And I propose to handle this subject in the following method.

I. I would observe wherein ministers of the gospel ought to follow the example of Christ.

II. Give some reasons why they should follow his example.

III. I would endeavour to make a proper application of those things to myself, and others that are called to this work of the ministry.

IV. Show what improvement should be made of them by the people of this church and congregation.

I. Then, I would show wherein ministers of the gospel ought in the work of their ministry, to follow the example of their great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

And here,

1. In general, ministers should follow their Lord and Master in all those excellent virtues, and in that universal and eminent holiness of life, which he set an example of in his human nature.

The ministers of Christ should be persons of the same spirit that their Lord was of: The same spirit of humility and lowliness of heart; for the servant is not greater than his Lord. They should be of the same spirit of heavenly mindedness and contempt of the glory, wealth, and pleasures of this world: They should be of the same spirit of devotion and fervent love to God: They should follow the example of his prayerfulness; of whom we read from time to time of his retiring from the world, away from the noise and applauses of the multitudes, into mountains and solitary places for secret prayer, and holy converse with his Father; and once of his rising up in the morning a great while before day, and going and departing into a solitary place to pray, Mark i. 35—and another time, of his going out into a mountain to pray, and continuing all night in prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. Ministers should follow Christ's example, in his strict, constant, and inflexible observance of the commands which God had given him, touching what he should do and what he should say; he spake nothing of himself, but those things which the Father had commanded him, those he spake, and always did those things that pleased him, and continued in thorough obedience and the greatest trials, and through the greatest opposition that ever there was any instance of. Ministers should be persons of the same quiet, lamb-like spirit that Christ was of, the same spirit of submission to God's will, and patience under afflictions, and meekness towards men, of the same calmness and composure of spirit under reproaches and sufferings from the malignity of evil men; of the same spirit of forgiveness of injuries; of the same spirit of charity, of fervent love and extensive benevolence; the same disposition to pity the miserable, to weep with those that weep, to help men under their calamities of both soul and body, to hear and grant the requests of the needy, and relieve the afflicted; the same spirit of condescension to the poor and mean, tenderness and gentleness towards the weak, and great and effectual love to enemies. They should also be of the same spirit of zeal, diligence, and self-denial for the glory of God, and advancement of his kingdom, and for the good of mankind; for which things' sake Christ went through the greatest labours, and endured the most extreme sufferings.

2. More particularly should ministers of the gospel follow the example of their great Master, in the manner in which they

seek the salvation and happiness of the souls of men. They should follow his example of love to souls: Though it be impossible that they should love them to so great a degree, yet they should have the same spirit of love to them, and concern for their salvation, according to their capacity. Love to men's souls in Christ was far above any regard he had to his temporal interest, his ease, his honour, his meat and drink; and so it should be with his ministers. They should have the same spirit of compassion to men under their spiritual calamities and miseries, that he had of whom we read, Mark vi. 34, "That when he came out and saw much people, he was moved with compassion towards them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things." The word translated *moved with compassion*, signifies, that he was most sensibly affected, and his inmost bowels moved with pity. And again we read, Luke xix. that when Christ was riding to Jerusalem, that wicked city, but a few days before his crucifixion, and was come to the descent of the mount of Olives, where he had a fair view of the city, when he beheld it, he wept over it, on account of the misery and ruin they had brought themselves into danger of by their sin; although the sin by which especially they had made themselves thus miserable, was their vile treatment of him; (for Jerusalem was a city that had been peculiarly injurious to him;) and though Christ knew how cruelly he should be treated in that city before that week was past, how he there should be set at nought, and with great malignity bound, falsely accused and condemned, reviled, spit upon, scourged and crucified: Yet all does not prevent his most affectionate tears of compassion towards them. "When he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, (thou as wicked as thou art, and as vile as thou hast been in thy treatment of me; even thou,) the things which belong unto thy peace! But now they are hid from thine eyes." (Compare Matth. xxiii. 37, and Luke xiii. 34.) One would have thought he would have been more concerned for himself than Jerusalem, who had such a dreadful cup to drink, and was to suffer such extreme things by the cruelty of Jerusalem that week. But he as it were, forgets his own sorrow and death, and weeps over the misery of his cruel enemies.

Ministers should imitate their great Master in his fervent prayers for the good of the souls of men. We find it to be Christ's manner whenever he undertook any thing of special importance in the work of his ministry, first to retire and pour out his soul in extraordinary prayer to his Father. Thus when he was about to enter on a journey, and go a circuit throughout all Galilee, to preach in their synagogues, "he rose up a great

while before day, and went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." Mark i. 35—39. And when he was about to choose his twelve apostles, and send them out to preach the gospel, he first *went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God.* Luke vi. 12, &c. And the night before his crucifixion, wherein he offered up himself a sacrifice for the souls of men, he pours out his soul in extraordinary prayer, for those he was about to die for, as we have an account in John xvii. That wonderful and most affecting prayer of his, was not so much for himself as for his people. Although he knew what amazing sufferings he was to undergo the next day, yet he seems as it were to be unmindful of himself, and to have his heart all taken up with concern about his disciples; which he manifests in his spending so much time in comforting and counselling them, and praying for them with great affection, compassion, earnest care and fatherly tenderness. And the prayers that he made in the garden of Gethsemane, under the amazing view of the cup he was to drink the next day, seem to be intercessory; especially the last of the three prayers which he there made, *when being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground:* When he did not pray that the cup might pass from him, as he had done before, but that *God's will might be done.* (Compare Luke xxii. 44, with Matth. xxvi. 42.) That prayer, as the apostle teaches us, Heb. v. 6, 7, was a prayer that he put up as our High Priest; and therefore must be a prayer of intercession for us, a prayer offered up with his blood which he sweat in his agony; as prayers were wont to be offered up with the blood of the sacrifices in the temple. His prayer at that time, *Thy will be done*, was not only an expression of submission, but had the form of a petition, as it is in the Lord's prayer. He prayed that God's will might be done in *his* being enabled *to do the will of God*, persevering in obedience unto death; and in the success of his sufferings; which might in an eminent manner be called the will of God, as it is in Psa. xl. 7, 8. "Then said I, Lo, I come——I delight to do thy will, O my God."

Ministers should follow the example of Christ in his diligence and laboriousness in his work. "He went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil." Acts x. 38. So abundant was he in labours, that oftentimes he scarcely allowed himself time to eat or drink; insomuch that his friends sometimes went out to lay hold of him, saying, "He is beside himself." Mark iii. 20, 21. That three years and an half of his public ministry was so filled with action and labour, that one of his disciples that constantly attended him, and was an eye-witness

of his activity, tells us that if *all that he did should be written, the world would not contain the books.*

Ministers should follow the example of Christ, in his readiness not only to labour, but suffer for the salvation of souls, to spend and be spent for them. In this respect the apostle Paul imitated his Lord and Master. Philipp. ii. 17. "Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all." Col. i. 24. "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh, for his body's sake, which is the church." 2 Cor. xii. 15. "And I will very gladly spend and be spent for you." Christ, in his prayers, labours, and sufferings for the souls of men, is represented as travailing in birth with them. Isai. liii. 11. "He shall see of the travail of his soul." In like manner should ministers travail for the conversion and salvation of their hearers. They should imitate the faithfulness of Christ in his ministry, in speaking whatsoever God had commanded him, and declaring the whole counsel of God. They should imitate him in the manner of his preaching; who taught not as the Scribes, but with authority, boldly, zealously, and fervently; insisting chiefly on the most important things in religion, being much in warning men of the danger of damnation, setting forth the greatness of the future misery of the ungodly; insisting not only on the outward, but also the inward and spiritual duties of religion; being much in declaring the great provocation and danger of spiritual pride, and a self-righteous disposition; yet much insisting on the necessity and importance of inherent holiness, and the practice of piety. Behaving himself with admirable wisdom in all that he said and did in his ministry, amidst the many difficulties, enemies, and temptations he was surrounded with, wonderfully adapting his discourses to persons, seasons, and occasions. Isai. l. 4. "The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary."

Ministers should follow their Master in his zeal, so wonderfully mixed and tempered with gentleness and condescension in his dealing with souls; preaching the gospel to the poor, and taking a gracious notice from time to time of little children. And they should imitate their Lord in his following the work of the ministry, not from mercenary views, or for the sake of wordly advantages, but for God's glory, and men's salvation; and in having his heart engaged in his work; it being his great delight, and his meat to do the will of his Father, and finish his work, John iv. 34, and having his heart set on the success of his great undertaking in the salvation of souls; this being the joy that was set before him, for which he run his race, endured the

cross, and despised the shame; his delight in the prospect of the eternal salvation of souls, more than countervailing the dread he had of his extreme sufferings. Many waters could not quench his love, neither could the floods drown it, for his love was stronger than death; yea, than the mighty pains and torments of such a death.

I now proceed to the

II. Thing proposed in the handling of this subject, which was to give some reasons why ministers of the gospel should follow the example of their great Lord and Master, Jesus Christ.

1. They should follow his example, because he is their Lord and Master. Christ, as he is a divine person, is the Lord of heaven and earth, and so one of infinite dignity, to whom our supreme respect is due; and on that account he is infinitely worthy that we should regard, not only his precepts, but example. The infinite honourableness of his person recommends his virtues, and a conformity to them as our greatest dignity and honour.

Christ is more especially the Lord of Christians; who are therefore under special obligations to follow him. He is their shepherd, and surely the flock should follow their shepherd. He is the captain of their salvation; and it becomes soldiers to follow their captain and leader. He is their head; not only their head of rule and authority, but their head of influence and communication, their vital head; and Christians are members of his body; but members, as partakers of the life and spirit of the head, are conformed to the head.

But Christ is still in a more peculiar manner the Lord and Master of ministers of the gospel, as they are not only members of his church, but the officers of his kingdom, and the dignified servants of his family. It is the manner of a people to imitate their prince; but especially the ministers of his kingdom, and officers of his household. It is the duty of the whole army to follow their general, but especially of those officers that have a commission under him.

2. Ministers of the gospel are in some respects called and devoted to the same work and business that Christ himself was appointed to. Ministers are not men's mediators; for there is but one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus: They are not our priests to make atonement and work out righteousness for us; for Christ by one offering has perfected for ever them that are sanctified: They are not lords over God's heritage; for one is their master, even Christ. But yet ministers of the gospel, as Christ's servants and officers under him, are appointed to promote the designs of that great work of Christ, the work of salvation. It is the work that ministers are

devoted to; and therefore they are represented as co-workers with Christ. 2 Cor. vi. 1. "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." Christ is the Saviour of the souls of men: ministers also, are spoken of in scripture as saving men's souls. 1 Tim. iv. 16. "In doing this, thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee." Rom. x. 14. "If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them." 1 Cor. ix. 22. "That I might by all means save some." And whereas it is said, Obad. 21, "Saviours shall come upon mount Zion;" ministers of the gospel are supposed to be there intended.

The work of ministers is in many respects like the work that Christ himself was appointed to, as the Saviour of men; and especially the same with the work which Christ does in his prophetical office; only with this difference, that ministers are to speak and act wholly under Christ, as taught of him, as holding forth his word, and by light and strength communicated from him. Christ himself, after his baptism, followed the work of the ministry: He was a minister of the true sanctuary, (Heb. viii. 2,) he spake and acted as his Father's minister; was a minister of the gospel, and as such preached and administered sacraments.

Pastors of churches are ministers of the same gospel; but in their ministry they act as the ministers of Christ. Jesus Christ is the great Bishop of souls; ministers are also bishops under him. Christ came into the world *that he might be the light of the world;* ministers are set to be lights unto the churches, and are also said to be *the light of the world.* Matth. v. 14. Christ is the *bright and morning star;* ministers are *stars in Christ's hand.* Christ is *the messenger of the covenant;* ministers are called *messengers of the Lord of hosts.* Christ is his people's *shepherd, the good shepherd, the great shepherd of his sheep.* Ministers are also frequently called shepherds, and are directed to feed the flock of Christ, which he purchased with his own blood.

Seeing therefore it is thus, that the work that ministers are called and devoted to, is no other than the work of Christ, or the work that Christ does, certainly they ought to do his work; which they do not do, unless they imitate him, and do as he does, or as he hath set them an example.

3. The example of Christ is most worthy of ministers' imitation. His example was perfect, without error, blemish, or defect; and therefore worthy to be made our rule, and to be regarded and followed without exception, limitation, or reserve; unless in those things which he did that were proper to his peculiar office. Christ's virtue was not only perfect, but was ex-

ercised in those circumstances, and under those trials, that rendered his virtuous acts vastly the most amiable of any that ever appeared in any creature whether man or angel. If we consider the perfection of the virtue that Christ exercised, his virtue did exceed that of the most eminent saints, more than the purest gold exceeds the meanest and foulest ore: And if we consider the manner of its exercise, and the trials under which it was exercised, and the blessed fruits it has brought forth, so his virtue exceeds that of all other perfectly innocent creatures, and even of the brightest angel, as the sun in its glory exceeds the stars.

And this example was set us in our own nature, and so is especially fitted for our imitation. There was in the man Christ Jesus, who was one of us, and dwelt among us, such exercises of virtue as became our state and circumstances in the world, as those who dwell in frail flesh and blood, and as members of human society, and dwellers in such a world of sorrow and death.

And then these amiable exercises of virtue in Christ, were exhibited chiefly in the things which he did in that work wherein ministers are called to act as co-workers with him. The bright and glorious example of Christ that is set before us, is chiefly in what he did during the three years and an half of his public ministry; and in the devotion, heavenly-mindedness, humility, patience, meekness, forgiveness, self-denial, and charity, which he exercised in the labours and sufferings he went through for the good of the souls of men: And therefore is especially set for the imitation of those who are set apart that they may make it the whole business of their lives to seek the same good of souls.

4. Ministers should follow that example of Christ which has been spoken of, because if they are fit for ministers, and are such as have any right to take that work upon themselves, Christ has set them this example in what he has done for their souls. "I have given you an example (says Christ in the text) that you should do as I have done to you." Ministers should be animated in this work by a great love to the souls of men, and should be ready to spend and be spent for them; for Christ loved them, and gave himself for them: He loved them with a love stronger than death. They should have compassion to men under their spiritual miseries, as Christ had pity on them. They should be much in prayer for the people of their flock, considering how Christ prayed and agonized for them, in tears of blood. They should travail in birth with the souls that are committed to their care, seeing their own salvation is the fruit of the travail of Christ's soul. They should exercise a meek and condescend-

ing spirit to the mean and weak and poor, and should as it were wash the feet of Christ's disciples; considering how Christ condescended to them, when they were wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, and abased himself to wash their feet.

The chief trials of Christ's virtue, and so their most bright and eminent exercises, were in the abasement, labour, and suffering, that he was the subject of for our salvation. Which certainly may well endear those virtues to us, and greatly engage us to imitate that example: So thethings where of this example consists, were things by which we have infinite benefit, without which we should have been unspeakably miserable for ever and ever, and by virtue of which we have the glorious privilege of the children of God, and have a full title to the crown of exceeding glory, and pleasures for evermore, at God's right hand.

III. I now proceed, as was proposed, in the third place, to apply what has been said to myself, and others that are employed in this sacred work of the gospel ministry, and to such as are about to undertake it, or are candidates for it; and particularly to him that is now to be solemnly set apart to this work in this place.

We are those to whom these things especially belong: We may hear Christ saying to us this day, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done." For the words of Christ in the text were not only spoken to the twelve, but are also spoken unto us. We have now had represented to us, though in a very imperfect manner, the example that Christ has set, and what reasons there are that we, above all others, should imitate it.

It is not only our great duty, but will be our greatest honour, to imitate Christ, and do the work that he has done, and so act as co-workers with him.

There are two kinds of persons that are given to Christ, and appointed and devoted of God to be his servants, to be employed with Christ, and under him, in his great work of the salvation of the souls of men; and they are angels and ministers. The angels are all of them, even the most exalted of them, subjected of God the Father to our Redeemer, and given to him as his servants, to be subservient to the great designs of his saving and glorifying his elect. Heb. i. 14. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent for to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And doubtless, they were created for this very end; God made them for his Son, to be subservient to him in this great work; which seems to be the chief design of all God's works. And the employment of ministers of the gospel in this respect, is like that of the glorious angels. The

principalities and powers in heavenly places, esteem it not any debasement, but their great honour, to be employed as Christ's ministers in this work; for therein they are employed as the ministers of God, in the greatest and most honourable of all God's works; that work of God wherein his glory is chiefly displayed, and which his heart was chiefly upon from eternity. It is the honour of the Son of God himself, that he is appointed to this work. It was because God the Father infinitely loved his Son, and delighted to put honour upon him, that he appointed him to be the author of that glorious work of the salvation of men. And when we consider the greatness, importance, and excellency of it, we have reason to be astonished at the condescension of God, that he would ever improve mere creatures as co-workers and ministers of Christ in this affair; *for who is sufficient for these things?* 2 Cor. ii. 6. "Who is fit, or worthy? Who is equal to a work of such dignity, and vast importance?" Especially have we reason to wonder that God will employ, not only holy and glorious angels, but feeble, frail, sinful worms of the dust, in this work, who need redemption themselves: And yet the honour that is put upon faithful ministers, is, in some respects, greater than that of the angels: They seem to be that kind of servants that are the most dignified of the two. For Christ makes his angels to be ministering spirits unto them, unto the faithful ministers; and the angels are their angels: As faithful ministers of the gospel are not only ministers to the church, but dignified members of the church, that spouse of the King of glory, on whom the most glorious angels, the highest ministers in the court of heaven, are appointed to attend. And then Christ seems especially to delight to carry on his work of the salvation of souls, through the ministrations of men, who have that nature that Christ is united to, and that are of those sons of men with whom he had his delight before the world was made. So it is by the ministration of men, that the scriptures are given; they were the penmen of the holy bible; and by them the gospel is preached to the world: By them ordinances are administered, and, through their ministrations, especially, souls are converted. When Christ himself was employed in the work of the ministry, in the time of his humiliation, but few, comparatively, were brought home to him, immediately by his ministrations: It pleased Christ to reserve this honour for his disciples and ministers, after his ascension, to whom he promised that they should, in this respect, do greater works than he, John xiv. 12, and accordingly it was by their preaching that the Gentile world was converted, and Satan's kingdom overthrown. Thus God delights "to perfect praise out of the

mouths of babes and sucklings, that he may still the enemy and the avenger."

It will be our great honour that we are called to this work of Christ, if therein we follow him: for therein we shall be like the Son of God: But if we are unfaithful in this office, and do not imitate our Master, our offence will be heinous in proportion to the dignity of our office, and our final and everlasting disgrace and ignominy proportionably great; and we, who in honour are exalted up to heaven, shall be cast down proportionably low in hell.

Let us further consider, that our following the example of Christ in the work of the ministry, is the way to enjoy the sensible joyful presence of Christ with us. The disciples had the comfort of Christ's presence and conversation by following him, and going where he went. When we cease to follow him, he will go from us, and we shall soon lose sight of him.

Our being conformed to Christ's example, will also be the way for us to be conformed to him, and partake with him in his privileges: It is the way for us to have his joy fulfilled in us. Christ, in doing the work to which the Father appointed him, obtained a glorious victory over his enemies, and having spoiled principalities and powers, triumphed over them. If we imitate his example, it will be the way for us in like manner to conquer principalities and powers, yea, to be much more than conquerors: It will be the way for us always to triumph in Jesus Christ. It will be the way for us to obtain success in our ministry, and actually to be made the happy instruments of the eternal salvation of souls. Christ has not only *told* us, but *shown* us the way to success in our business, and the way to victory over all that oppose us in it. And our imitating Christ in our ministry, will be the way for us to be partakers with him in his glory; the way for us in like manner to be approved, and openly honoured and rewarded by God; the way to be brought to sit with Christ on his throne, as he is set down with the Father on his throne. And as Christ is now exalted to shine as the bright luminary and glory of heaven, so our following his example, will be the way for us to be exalted, to *shine* with him, "as the stars for ever and ever." Daniel xii. 3. And as Christ in heaven rejoices in his success, and will receive his church, presented to him without spot, as his everlasting crown; so our imitating Christ in our work, will be the way to partake with Christ in this joy, and have the souls whose salvation we are the instruments of, to be our crown of rejoicing for ever. Thus Christ and we shall rejoice together in that world of glory and joy where there is no more labour or sorrow. And we must en-

ter into that joy and glory, in the way of following Christ in our work; there is no other way for ministers to enter there.

And that we may thus follow Christ's example, and be partakers with him in his glory, we had need to be much in prayer for his Spirit. Christ himself, though the eternal Son of God, obtained the Holy Spirit for himself in a way of prayer. Luke iii. 21, 22. "Jesus being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended like a dove upon him." If we have the spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we shall have Christ himself thereby living in us, and then we shall undoubtedly live like him. If that fountain of light dwells richly in us, we shall shine like him, and so shall be burning and shining lights.

That we may *be* and *behave* like Christ, we should earnestly seek much acquaintance with him, and much love to him, and be much in secret converse with him. It is natural, and as it were necessary for us to imitate those whom we are much acquainted and conversant with, and have a strong affection for.

And in order to our imitating Christ in the work of the ministry, in any tolerable degree, we had need not to have our hearts overcharged, and time filled up with worldly affections, cares, and pursuits. The duties of a minister that have been recommended, are absolutely inconsistent with a mind much taken up with worldly profit, glory, amusements, and entertainments.

And another thing that is of very great importance, in order to our doing the work that Christ did, is, that we take heed that the religion we promote, be that same religion that Christ taught and promoted, and not any of its counterfeits and delusive appearances, or any thing substituted by the subtle devices of Satan, or vain imaginations of men, in lieu of it. If we are zealous and very diligent to promote religion, but do not take good care to distinguish true from false religion, we shall be in danger of doing much more hurt than good, with all our zeal and activity.

I come now to the

IV. And last thing at first proposed, viz. to show what improvement should be made of what has been said, by the people of this church and congregation, who are now about solemnly to commit their souls to the charge of him whom they have chosen to be their pastor, and who is now about to be set apart to that office.

And YOU, MY BRETHREN, as all of you have immortal souls to save, if you have considered the things that have been spoken, cannot but be sensible, that it not only greatly concerns your elect pastor to take heed how he behaves himself in his great work, wherein he is to act as a co-worker with Christ for your salvation; but that it infinitely concerns you how you receive him, and behave towards him. Seeing that it is for *your* eternal salvation that he is appointed to watch and labour; and seeing his busi-

ness is to do the work of Christ for you, it is natural and easy to infer, that your reception and entertainment of him should in some respect imitate the church's reception of Jesus Christ. Gal. iv. 14. "My temptation which was in my flesh, ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, even as Christ Jesus." Christ, in the text, commands those whom he sends, to follow his example, and then in the 20th verse following, he directs those to whom he sends them, how to treat them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." Seeing the work of your minister is in some respects the same with the work of Christ, and he is to be appointed and devoted to do this work for your souls in particular, surely you should esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake, and do all that is in your power to help him, and put him under the best advantages to imitate his great master *in* this work, to give himself wholly *to* his work, as Christ did during the time of his ministry, and to be successful *in* his work. And as it was observed before, that it is impossible that ministers should in any tolerable degree imitate the example of Christ in their work, if their minds are overcharged with worldly cares and concerns, you ought so to provide for him and support him, that he shall have no need to entangle himself with these things; otherwise you will not only bring a great temptation upon him, which will vastly tend to hinder him in the work of Christ among you, but will for the sake of sparing a little of your worldly substance to yourselves, foolishly and miserably starve your own souls, and the souls of your children, and will but cheat yourselves; for you will not be in the way to prosper either in your spiritual or temporal concerns. The way to have your houses filled with plenty, is to "honour the Lord with your substance, and with the first fruits of all your increase," Prov. iii. 9.

And as it is your duty and interest well to support your minister, so it concerns you to pray earnestly for him, and each one to do what in him lies in all respects to encourage and help him, and strengthen his hands, by attending diligently to his ministry, receiving the truth in love, treating him with the honour due to a messenger of Christ, carefully avoiding all contention with him, and one with another. And take heed in particular, that you do not forsake him to follow those, who under pretence of extraordinary purity, are doubtless doing the devil's work, in separating themselves, and endeavouring to draw off others from the ministers and churches in the land in general.

If you think I have spoken something freely to you, I hope it will be considered, that this is probably the last time you will ever hear me speak from the pulpit, and that I shall never see you again

till we see one another in the invisible and eternal world, where these things will open to us all in their just importance.

And now nothing is left but to express my sincerest wishes and prayers, that the God of all grace would be with you and your elect pastor, and that he would give you in him a great and long lasting blessing, that you may enjoy much of the presence of Christ with you in him; that in him may be made up the great loss you sustained by the death of your former faithful and eminent pastor, whose praise was in all the churches; and that you may receive him as you ought to receive a faithful minister of Jesus Christ, and may be a great comfort to him, and may receive great spiritual and eternal benefit by his means; and that you may be each other's crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

SERMON XVII.*

THE SORROWS OF THE BEREAVED SPREAD BEFORE JESUS.

MATTHEW xiv. 12.

And his disciples came and took up the body and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

CONCERNING these words I would observe three things.

1. On what occasion that was, that we have an account of in the text. It was on occasion of the death of John the Baptist, who was a person whose business it had been to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God. He was a minister of Jesus Christ, and had been improved to do great service, was an instrument of much good to many in Judea and Jerusalem, in his life time. He was cruelly murdered by Herod, at the instigation of Herodias, having exposed himself to her malice by faithfully reproving them for their incestuous wickedness.

2. We may observe who the persons were spoken of in the text; they were those that had been the disciples of John the Baptist, that had sat at his feet to hear him preach the gospel, that were his constant followers, that were with him as those that received great benefit by his ministry, and were as it were his children.

3. We may observe their behaviour on this occasion, consisting in two things.

(1.) That whereby they showed their regard to the remains of the deceased, *They took up the body and buried it:* It had been used in a barbarous manner, by others, that had also been his hearers, and were under special obligations to have treated him with honour. They cruelly murdered him, by severing his

* Preached at Hatfield, September 2, 1741, being the day of the interment of the Rev. Mr. William Williams.

head from his body; and his head was carried in a charger to Herodias, that she, instead of paying that respect that was due to the remains of so venerable a person, might have her malice and cruelty gratified by such a spectacle, and that she might thence take occasion to insult the dead. While that part of the dead body was thus used by Herodias, his disciples out of respect and honour to their master and teacher, decently interred the rest.

(2.) That which they did, consequent on this, for God's glory and their own good, *They went and told Jesus.* Him they knew to be one that their master John, while he lived, had testified a great regard to. Jesus was he whose forerunner John was; whom he had preached, and of whom he had said, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world:" And, "This is he, of whom I said, After me cometh one that is preferred before me;" and whom he saw, and bare record that *this is the Son of God.* And probably they knew that Christ was one that had put great honour upon John their teacher in his life time. For he, though he was the Son of God, and John's Maker and Saviour, yet came to him to be baptized of him, and had said of him, that "Among those that were born of women, there had not risen a greater than John the Baptist."

It was now a sorrowful time with John's disciples; when they were thus bereaved of him whose teachings they had sat under. And the manner of his death was doubtless very grievous to them. They were like a company of sorrowful, distressed, bereaved children; and what do they do in their sorrows, but go to Jesus with their complaint. The first thing that they do, after paying proper regards to the remains of their dear master, is to go to Christ, to spread their case before him, seeking comfort and help from him. Thus they sought their own benefit.

And probably one end of their immediately going and telling Jesus was, that he, being informed of it, might conduct himself accordingly, as his wisdom should direct, for the interest of his own kingdom. When so great a person as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Christ, was thus martyred, it was a great event, in which the common cause, in which both Christ and he were engaged, was greatly concerned: It was therefore fit that he that was at the head of the whole affair should be informed of it, for his future conduct in the affairs of his kingdom. And accordingly we find that Jesus seems immediately to be influenced in his conduct by these tidings; as you may see in the next verse: "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by a ship into a desert place apart." Thus John's disciples sought God's glory.

The observation from the words that I would make the subject of my discourse at this time, is this:

When any one is taken away by death, that has been eminent in the work of the gospel ministry, such as are thereby bereaved, should go and spread their calamity before Jesus.

Though in handling this subject I might particularly speak to several propositions that are contained in this observation, and many things might profitably be insisted on under it, if there were room for it within the compass of a sermon; yet I shall only give the *reasons of the doctrine*, and then hasten to the application.

The following reasons may be given why, in case of such an awful dispensation of Providence, those that are concerned in it, and bereaved by it, should go and spread their sorrows before Jesus:

1. Christ is one that is ready to pity the afflicted. It is natural for persons that are bereaved of any that are dear to them, and for all under deep sorrow, to seek some that they may declare and lay open their griefs to, that they have good reason to think will pity them, and have a fellow-feeling with them of their distress. The heart that is full of grief wants vent, and desires to pour out its complaint; but it seeks a compassionate friend to pour it out before.

Christ is such an one, above all others. He of old, before his incarnation, manifested himself full of compassion towards his people; for that is Jesus that is spoken of, Isai. lxiii. 9, "In all their affliction he was afflicted; and the angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old." And when he was upon earth in his state of humiliation, he was the most wonderful instance of a tender, pitiful, compassionate spirit, that ever appeared in the world. How often are we told of his having compassion on one and another! So Matth. xv. 32. "Then Jesus called his disciples, and said unto them, I have compassion on the multitude." So he had compassion on the man possessed with devils. Mark v. 19. "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done to thee, and hath had compassion on thee." So we read of his pitying the mother, that was bereaved of her son. Luke vii. 13. There we have an account, when Christ went into the city of Nain, and met the people carrying out a dead man, the only son of his mother, that was a widow, that when he saw her, he had compassion on her. So when the two blind men that sat by the way side, cried to Jesus, as he passed by, saying, "Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David," we read that Jesus had compassion on them. Matth. xx. 39. So we read of his being moved with compassion. Matth. xiv. 14. "And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and when

he saw them he was moved with compassion." His speeches to his disciples were full of compassion; especially those that he uttered a little before his death, of which we have an account in the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th chapters of John. His miracles were almost universally deeds of pity to persons under affliction.

And seeing such a pitiful heart appeared in him on all occasions, no wonder that John's disciples, when bereaved of their dear guide and teacher, and their hearts were full of sorrow, came to him for pity: Which likewise induced Mary and Martha to come and fall down, pouring out their tears at Jesus's feet, when their dear brother Lazarus was dead: Other Jews came to comfort them, before Jesus came, whom they little regarded, but when they heard that Jesus was come, they soon go and spread their sorrows before him; they were assured that he would pity them; and their expectation was not frustrated; for he was most tenderly affected and moved at their tears: We are told that on that occasion he groaned in spirit and was troubled. John xi. 33. And when he came to the grave, it is observed, and a special note seems to be set upon it, that he wept, verse 35.

He was one that wept with those that wept: And indeed it was mere pity that brought him into the world, and induced him not only to shed tears but to shed his blood: He poured out his blood as water on the earth, out of compassion to the poor, miserable children of men. And when do we ever read of any one person coming to him when on earth, with an heavy heart, or under any kind of sorrow or distress for pity or help, but what met with a kind and compassionate reception?

And he has the *same compassion* now he is *ascended into glory:* There is still the same encouragement for bereaved ones to go and spread their sorrows before him.

Afflicted persons love to speak of their sorrows to them that have had EXPERIENCE of affliction, and know what sorrow is: But there is none on earth or in heaven that ever had so much experience of sorrow as Christ: Therefore he knows how to pity the sorrowful, and especially may we be confident that he is ready to pity those that are bereaved of a faithful MINISTER, because such a bereavement is a calamity that concerns the *souls of men;* and Christ hath especially shown his pity to men's souls; for it was chiefly for them that he died: To relieve the miseries of the soul especially, is it that he hath provided; and it was from pity to the souls of men that he made that provision for them that he hath done, in appointing such an order of men as GOSPEL MINISTERS, and in sending them forth to preach the gospel: It was because he had compassion on men's souls, that he hath appointed ministers to watch for souls.

2. Christ *has purchased all that persons need under such a bereavement.* He has purchased all that miserable men stand in need of under all their calamities, and comfort under every sort of affliction; and therefore that his invitation to those that "Labour and are heavy laden," to come to him for rest, may be understood in the most extensive sense, to extend to those that are "heavy laden" with either natural or moral evil: He has purchased divine cordials and supports for those hearts that are ready to sink: He has purchased all needed comfort and help for the widow and the fatherless: He has purchased a sanctified improvement and fruit of affliction, for all such as come to him, and spread their sorrows before him. He has purchased those things that are sufficient to make up their loss, that are bereaved of a great blessing in an eminent minister of the gospel: It is he that has purchased those divine blessings, those influences and fruits of the Spirit of God, that the work of the ministry is appointed to be the means of. Faithful ministers themselves, are the fruits of his purchase; and he has purchased all those gifts and graces whereby ministers do become faithful, eminent and successful; and therefore when he "ascended up on high, he received such gifts for men." Eph. iv. 8 &c.—So that he has purchased all that is needed to make up for the loss that is sustained by the death of an eminent minister.

3. Christ is able to afford all that help that is needed in such a case. His power and his wisdom are as sufficient as his purpose, and answerable to his compassions. By the bowels of his mercies, the love and tenderness of his heart, he is disposed to help those that are in affliction; and his ability is answerable to his disposition. He is able to support the heart under the heaviest sorrows, and to give light in the greatest darkness: He can divide the thickest cloud with beams of heavenly light and comfort: He is one that gives songs in the night, and turns the shadow of death into the morning: He has power to make up the loss of those that are bereaved by the death of the most eminent minister. His own presence with the bereaved is sufficient; if the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls be present, how much more is this than enough to supply the want of any under Shepherd? And then he is able to furnish others with like gifts and graces for that work.

Persons under sorrowful bereavements are ready to go and lay open their sorrows to them that they think will be ready to pity them, though they know they can but pity them, and cannot help them. How much more is here in such a case to induce us to go to Jesus, who is not only so ready to pity, but so able to help, able abundantly more than to fill up the breach, and able to turn all our sorrows into joy?

4. The consideration of the special office of Christ, and the work that he has undertaken for his people, should engage them to go and spread such a calamity, as the bereavement of a faithful and eminent minister, before him: For he is the *Head of the body*, the great Shepherd of the sheep, and lord of the harvest; that has undertaken the care of the whole church, and has the absolute government of it in his hands, and the supreme disposal and management of all ecclesiastical affairs, to whom belongs the care of the universal church, and every part of it, with respect to its supply with such guides, officers, and ordinances, as it stands in need of. In case of bereavement of an eminent minister, it was he that sent forth such a minister, appointed him his charge, and furnished him for his work, continued and assisted him in it, and in his own time removed him; and it is he that, in such a case, by his office, has the care of filling up the vacancy, and furnishing, establishing, and assisting successors, and supplying all the wants of bereaved churches. It is surely therefore suitable and natural to go to him in such a case, and spread such a calamity before him.

APPLICATION.

I come now to apply what has been said to the SORROWFUL OCCASION of our being thus assembled at this time, even the death of that aged SERVANT of God, who has long been eminent in the work of the gospel ministry in this place.

There are many that may well look on themselves as nearly concerned in this awful Providence, and sharers in the bereavement; all of whom should be directed by this doctrine, to go and spread their affliction before JESUS, that compassionate, all-sufficient head of the church, and Saviour of the body, that merciful and faithful High Priest, that knows how to pity the afflicted.

And particularly it now becomes and concerns you, that belong to this *church and congregation*, that are bereaved of your aged and eminent PASTOR and FATHER, that has so long been a great blessing to you, now to go and tell JESUS.

The disciples of John, spoken of in the text, were those that were ordinarily under his instruction, and were his constant hearers, as it has been with you with respect to your aged PASTOR, that is now taken from you. Therefore be exhorted to do as they did. Do not think that you have finished your duty, when you have taken up his body and buried it, and have shown respect to his memory and remains at his funeral: This is the least part of your duty: That which mainly concerns you under this awful Providence, is between Christ and your own souls.

God has now taken away from you an able and faithful minister of the New Testament, one that had long been a FATHER to you, and a FATHER in our Israel, a person of uncommon natural abilities, and distinguished learning, a great divine, of very comprehensive knowledge, and of a solid, accurate judgment.—Judiciousness and wisdom were eminently his character. He was one of eminent gifts, qualifying him for all parts of the work of the ministry; and there appeared a savour of holiness in his exercise of those gifts in public and private: So that he improved them as a servant of Christ, and a man of God. He was not negligent of the talents which his Lord had committed to him; you need not be told with what constant diligence he improved them, how studious at home, and how laborious in his public work: He ever devoted himself to the work to which he is called: The ministry which he had received of the Lord, he took heed to fulfil, and pursued it with a constant and steadfast, even mind, through all its difficulties.

You know his manner of addressing heaven in his public prayers with you and for you, with what sanctity, humility, faith, and fervency, he seemed to apply himself to the FATHER of lights, from time to time, when he stood in this desk as your mouth to God, and interceding for you, pleading with God through the grace and merits of a glorious MEDIATOR. And you know his manner of applying himself to you, when he came to you, from time to time, in the name of the Lord.

In his PUBLIC ministry, he mainly insisted on the most weighty and important things of religion; he was eminently an evangelical preacher; evangelical subjects seemed to be his delight: CHRIST was the great subject of his preaching; and he much insisted on those things that did nearly concern the essence and power of religion; and had a peculiar faculty of judiciously and clearly handling the doctrines he insisted on, and treating properly whatever subject he took in hand; and of selecting the most weighty arguments and motives to enforce and set home those things that concern Christian experience and practice. His subjects were always weighty, and his manner of treating them peculiarly happy, showing the strength and accuracy of his judgment, and ever breathing forth the SPIRIT OF PIETY, and a deep sense of the things he delivered, on his heart. His sermons were none of them mean, but were all solid, wise compositions. His words were none of them vain, but all were weighty.

And you need not be told with what weight the welfare of your souls seemed to lie on his heart, and how he instructed, and reproved, and warned, and exhorted you, with all authority,

and with a fatherly tender concern for your eternal good. And with what wisdom he presided in the house of God, and guided its affairs; and also counselled and directed you in private, under your particular soul exercises and difficulties. You know how he has brought you up (for most of you have been trained up from your childhood under his ministry) with what authority, and with what judgment, prudence, and steadiness, he has conducted you, as well as meekness and gentleness. You know his manner of going in and out among you, how exemplary his walk and conversation has been, with what gravity, judgment, and savour of holiness, he has walked before you, as a man of God.

You have enjoyed great advantages for your soul's good, under his ministry: That you had such a minister was your privilege and your honour; he has been an ornament to the town of HATFIELD; and his presence and conversation amongst you has been both profitable and pleasant; for though it was such as did peculiarly command AWE and RESPECT, yet it was at the same time, HUMBLE and CONDESCENDING: It tended both to instruct and entertain those that he conversed with: As a wise man, and endued with knowledge, he *showed out of good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.*

But now it hath pleased an holy God to take him away from you: You will see his face and hear his voice no more, in the land of the living: You will no more have the comfort and benefits of his presence with you, and the exercise of his ministry among you.

Therefore now go to Jesus, the Supreme Head of the church, and *Bishop of souls.* Your pastor is dead, and will not live again till the last day: But Christ, the *chief Shepherd*, though *he was dead*, is *now alive! And behold he lives for evermore. He ever lives* to provide for his church, and to guide and feed his flock. Go to that Jesus whom your deceased pastor preached, and to whom he earnestly invited you while he lived, and give thanks for the many blessings you enjoyed in him. Remember how you have *received and heard*, and *hold fast* that no man take your crown;* and go and *humble yourselves also before him*, that you made no better improvement of the ministry of your pastor while he lived; and beg of him a sanctified improvement of his awful hand in taking him away, and that he would help you to remember his warnings and counsels that you too much slighted whilst you had them, lest those warnings and counsels

* Particularly, remember his late affectionate farewell, at the *table of the Lord*, not expecting such another opportunity with you. Exhorting you to follow *peace and holiness* and to *edify one another.*

cry against you, and rise up in judgment against you another day, lest you see your pastor, that so affectionately and earnestly, and so often, and for so long a time continued to exhort you, and earnestly prayed for you, while he lived, rising up in judgment, and bearing testimony against you, declaring how constantly and laboriously he entreated and called upon you, and how obstinately some of you slighted his counsels; and lest you see him sitting with Christ to judge and condemn you, and adoring his awful justice on your aggravated punishment.

All you that have an interest in JESUS, now go to him on this occasion, and tell him of your bereavement, and beg of him that he would not depart from you; but that he would make up his loss in his own immediate presence. Go to him for your surviving pastor, that he would be with him, and furnish him more and more for, and assist him in, that great work, that is now wholly devolved upon him, and make him also a *burning and shining light* amongst you; and that you may have of the presence and blessing of JESUS with you, and him.

And now, since I am called to speak in the name of Christ on this solemn occasion, I would apply myself to the near relations of the deceased, who are especially to be looked upon, as the bereaved.

God in his holy Providence has taken from you one that has been a great blessing, comfort and honour to you, and deservedly very dear to you, and honoured of you. The doctrine we are upon directs you what to do in your present circumstances, viz. to go to JESUS, to go and spread your affliction before an all-sufficient Redeemer.

And particularly I would apply myself to the honoured relict, who stood in the nearest relation of any to the deceased, whom God by this awful Providence has made a sorrowful widow. Suffer me, honoured madam, in your great affliction, to exhibit to you a compassionate Redeemer. God has now taken from you that servant of his, that was the nearest and best friend you had in this world, that was your wise and prudent guide, your affectionate and pleasant companion, who was so great a blessing while he lived, to you and your family, and under Christ, was so much the comfort and support of your life. You see, madam, where your resort must be: Your earthly friends can condole your loss, but cannot make it up to you; we must all confess ourselves to be but miserable comforters: But you may go and tell Jesus, and there you may have both support and reparation: His love and his presence is far beyond that of the nearest and most affectionate earthly friend. Now you are bereaved of your earthly consort, you may go to a spiritual husband, and seek his compassion and his company: He is the

fountain of all that wisdom and prudence, that piety, that tender affection and faithful care, that you enjoyed in your departed consort; in him is an infinite fountain of all these things, and of all good; in him you may have light in your darkness, comfort in your sorrow, and fullness of joy and glory in another world, in an everlasting union with your dear, deceased relative, in the glorious presence of the same *Redeemer, in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are pleasures for evermore.*

This doctrine also directs the bereaved, afflicted children, that are with hearts full of grief, now mourning over a dear departed father, where to go and what to do. You will no longer have your father's wisdom to guide you, his tender love to comfort and delight you, and his affectionate care to guard you and assist you, and his pious and judicious counsels to direct you, and his holy examples set before you, and his fervent, humble, believing prayers with you and for you.

But in the blessed Jesus, your father's Lord and Redeemer, you may have much more, than all those things: Your father's virtues that made him so great a blessing to you, were but the image of what is in Christ.

Therefore go to him in your mourning: Go and tell Jesus; tell a compassionate Saviour what has befallen you. Heretofore you have had an earthly father to go to, whose heart was full of tenderness to you; but the heart of his Redeemer is much more tender; his wisdom and his love is infinitely beyond that of any earthly parent. Go to him, and then you will surely find comfort. Go to him, and you will find that, though you are bereaved, yet you are not left in any want, you will find that all your wants are supplied, and all your loss made up, and much more than so.

But here I would particularly, in humility, address myself to my honoured fathers, the sons of the deceased, that are improved in the same great work of the gospel ministry, or in other public business for the service of their generation. Honoured sirs, though it might be more proper for me to come to you for instruction and counsel, than to take it upon me to exhort you, yet as I am one that ought to have a fellow-feeling of your affliction, and to look on myself as a sharer in it, and as you have desired me to speak in the name of Christ, on this occasion, suffer me to mention to you that source of comfort, that infinite fountain of good, one of the larger streams of which, has failed by the death of an earthly father, even the blessed Jesus. You will doubtless acknowledge it as an instance of his great goodness to you, that you have been the sons of such a father; being sensible that your reputation and

serviceableness in your generation, have been, under Christ, very much owing to the great advantages you have been under, by his instructions, counsels, and education. And is it not fit that children that have *learned of such a faithful servant of Christ*, and been brought up at his feet, now he is dead, should do as John the Baptist's disciples did, *go and tell Jesus?* from whom you may receive comfort under your bereavement, and from whom you may receive more of that Spirit that dwelt in him, and greater degrees of those virtues he derived from Christ, to cause you to shine brighter, and to make you still greater blessings in your generation. Now death has veiled and hid from sight, a *star* that shone with *reflected light*, our text and doctrine leads you to the *Sun*, that hath *light in himself*, and shines with infinite, unfailing brightness. And while you go to Jesus, honoured Sirs, on this occasion for yourselves, I humbly desire your requests to him for us the surviving ministers of this county, that he would be with us, now he has taken from us him that was a father amongst us.

I next would address myself to the surviving pastor of this church. We may well look upon you, Reverend Sir, as one in an especial manner concerned in this awful Providence, and that has a large share in the bereavement. You doubtless are sensible what reason you have to bless God for the advantage you have had, in serving in the gospel of Christ, so long as you have done, with the venerable person deceased, as a son with a father, enjoying the benefit of his instructions, counsels, and example. And particularly, you will often recollect the affectionate and fatherly counsels he gave you, to diligence and faithfulness in your Lord's work, with encouragement of his protection and assistance to carry you through all difficulties, the last evening of his life. And now, dear Sir, God has taken him from you, as he took Elijah from Elisha, and as he took John the Baptist, the New Testament Elijah, from his disciples: Therefore now you are directed what to do, viz. *go and tell Jesus;* as those disciples did. You have now a great work devolved upon you; you have him no more, who, while he lived, was as a father to you, to guide and assist you, and take the burthen of your great work from you. Therefore you have no where else to go, but to your great Lord and Master, that has sent you to labour in that part of his vineyard, where his aged, and now departed servant was employed, to seek strength and wisdom, and divine influence and assistance from him, and a double portion of that Spirit, that dwelt in your predecessor.

And lastly, The text I am upon may be of direction to us the surviving ministers of this county, what to do on this sorrowful occasion. God has now taken our father and master from our

head: He has removed him that has heretofore under Christ, been very much *our strength* that we have been wont to resort to in difficult cases for instruction and direction, and that used to be amongst us from time to time, in our associations, and that we were wont to behold as the head and ornament of those conventions.* Where else can we now go but to Jesus, the ever living Head of the whole church, and Lord of the whole harvest, the fountain of light, our great Lord and Master that sends all gospel ministers, and on whom they universally depend? Let this awful Providence bring us to look to Christ, to seek more of his presence with us; and that HE would preside as Head in our associations: Let it bring us to a more immediate and entire dependence upon him, for instruction and direction, in all our difficulties.

Let us on this occasion consider what God has done in this county of late years: It was not many years ago that the county was filled with aged ministers, that were our fathers: *But our fathers, where are they?* What a great alteration is made in a little time, in the churches in this part of the land!† How frequent of late have been the warnings of this kind that God has given us to prepare to give up our account! Let us go to Jesus, and seek grace of him that we may be faithful while we live, and that he would assist us in our great work, that when we also are called hence, we may *give up our account with joy and not with grief*, and that hereafter we may meet those our fathers, that have gone before us in the faithful labours of the gospel, and that we may shine forth with them, *as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever.*

* Very worthy of our notice was that his farewell message, sent us by one of our beloved brethren (the Rev. Mr. Williams of Springfield) after he returned from such a Meeting, where he also preached. "I do not expect," said he, "to be with you another Association Meeting: But I give you this advice, Love your Master, love your work, and love one another." How very expressive of his own spirit! Like John the beloved disciple.

† The Rev. Mr. Stoddard, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Williams of Deerfield, Mr. Brewer, and lately have died, Mr. Bull of Westfield, and Mr. Devotion of Suffield.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

ANGELS.

I CANNOT see why it should be thought more disagreeable to reason to suppose, that angels may have influence on matter so as to cause those alterations in it, which are beyond the established laws of matter, more than to suppose that our spirits should have such an influence. And I do not see why other spirits should not have influence on matter according to other laws; or why, if we suppose spirits have an influence on matter, that it must necessarily be according to the same established rules as our spirits. We find that from such motions of mind, there follows such an alteration in such and such matter, according to established rules; and those rules are entirely at the pleasure of him that establishes them. And why we should not think that God establishes other rules for other spirits, I cannot imagine. And if we should suggest, that according to established laws, angels do make alterations in the secret springs of bodies, and so of minds, that otherwise would not be, I cannot see why it should be accounted more of a miracle than that our souls can make alterations in the matter of our hands and feet, which otherwise would not be.

[442] *Angels confirmed.* The angels that stood are doubtless confirmed in holiness, and their allegiance to God; so that they never will sin, and they are out of every danger of it. But yet I believe God makes use of means to confirm them. They were confirmed by the sight of the terrible destruction that God brought upon the angels that fell. They see what a dreadful thing it is to rebel. They were further confirmed by the manifestation God had made of his displeasure against sin, by the eternal damnation of reprobates amongst men, and by the amazing discovery of his holy jealousy and justice in the sufferings of Christ. They are confirmed by finding by experience, their own happiness in standing and finding the mistake of the angels that fell, with respect to that which was their

temptation, and by new and greater manifestations of the glory of God, which have been successively made in heaven, and by his dispensations towards the church, and above all, by the work of redemption by Jesus Christ. Eph. iii. 10. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Peter i. 12. *Vide* No. 515.

Corol. Hence we learn that the angels were not concerned in the work of redemption by Jesus Christ.

So I believe the saints in heaven are made perfectly holy and impeccable, *by means*, viz: By the beatific vision of God in Christ in glory; by experiencing so much the happiness of holiness, its happy nature and issue; by seeing the wrath of God on wicked men, &c.

[681] The angels of heaven, though a superior order of being, and of a more exalted nature and faculties by far than men, are yet all ministering spirits sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation; and so in some respect are made inferior to the saints in honour. So likewise the angels of the churches, the ministers of the gospel that are of an higher order and office than other saints, yet they are by Christ's appointment, ministers and servants to others, and are least of all, as Matth. xx. 25, 26, 27. "Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant." Matth. xxiii. 8, 9, 10, 11, 12. "But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." And Mark ix. 35. "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." It is as it is in the body natural, those parts that we account more noble and honourable are, as it were, ministers to the more inferior, to guard them, and serve them, as the apostle observes, 1 Cor. xii. 23, 24. "And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." God's ways are all analogous, and his dispensations harmonize one with another. As it is between the saints that are of an inferior order of beings, and the angels which are of more exalted natures and degrees, and also between those Christians on earth that are of inferior

order, and those who are of superior, being ministers of Christ; so without doubt it also is in some respects in heaven, between those that are of lower, and those that are of higher degrees of glory. There, those that are most exalted in honour and happiness, though they are above the least, yet in some respects they are the least; being ministers to others, and employed by God to minister to their good and happiness. These sayings of Christ, in Matth. xx. 25, &c., and Mark ix. 35, were spoken on occasion of the disciples manifesting an ambition to be greatest in his kingdom, by which they meant his state of exaltation and glory; and so it is in some sort, even with respect to the man Christ Jesus himself, who is the very highest and most exalted of all creatures, and the head of all. He, to prepare himself for it, descended lowest of all, was most abased of any, and in some respects became least of all. Therefore, when Christ in these places directs that those that would be greatest among his disciples, should be the servants of the rest, and so in some respects, least; he enforces it with his own example. Matth. xx. 26, 27, 28. "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister, and whosever will be chief among you, let him be your servant. Even so the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." And Luke xxii. 26, 27. "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he that is chief as he that doth serve, for whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." None in the kingdom of heaven ever descended so low as Christ did, who descended as it were into the depths of hell. He suffered shame and wrath, and was made a curse. He went lower in these things than ever any other did, and this he did as a servant not only to God, but to men, in that he undertook to serve us, and minister to us in such dreadful drudgery, while we sit at meat in quietness and rest, and partake of those dainties which he provides for us. Christ took upon him to minister to us in the lowest service, which he represented and typified by that action of washing the disciples' feet, which he did chiefly for that end. Thus Christ is he that seems to be intended in Matth. xi. 11, by him "that is least in the kingdom of heaven;" who is there said to be greater than John the Baptist.

The design of God in thus ordering things, is to teach and show that he is all, and the creature nothing, and that all exaltation and dignity belong to him; and therefore those creatures that are most exalted shall in other respects be least and lowest. Thus, though the angels excel in wisdom and strength, and are advanced to glorious dignity, and are principalities and

powers, and kings of the earth, yet God makes them all ministers to them who are much less than they, of inferior nature and degree. Thus, also, the saints who are most exalted in dignity are servants to others. The angelic nature is the highest and most exalted created nature; yet God is pleased to put greater honour upon our inferior nature, viz. the human, by causing that the Head and King of all creatures should be in the human nature, and that the saints in that nature in Christ, should be in many respects exalted above the angels, that the angelic nature may not magnify itself against the human; and the man Christ Jesus, that creature who is above all, owes his superiority and dignity, not at all to himself, but to God; viz. to his union with a Divine person. Though he be above all, yet in some respects he is inferior; for he is not in the highest created nature, but in a nature that is inferior to the angelic. To prepare him for his exaltation above all, he was first brought lowest of all in suffering and humiliation, and in some respects in office, or in those parts of the office that were executed by him in his state of humiliation. Though the saints are exalted to glorious dignity, even to union and fellowship with God himself; to be in some respects divine in glory and happiness, and in many respects to be exalted above the angels; yet care is taken that it should not be in themselves, but in a person who is God, and they must be as it were emptied of themselves in order to it. And though the angels are exalted in themselves, yet they are ministers to them who are not exalted in themselves, but only in communion with a divine person as of free grace partaking with them. Thus wisely hath God ordered all things for his own glory, that however great and marvellous the exercises of his grace, and love, and condescension are to the creature, yet he alone may be exalted, and that he may be all in all. And though the creature be unspeakably and wonderfully advanced in honour by God's grace and love; yet it is in such a way and manner, that even in its exaltation it might be humbled, and so as that its nothingness before God, and its absolute dependence on God, and subjection to him, might be manifested. Yet this humiliation or abasement, which is joined with the creatures' exaltation, is such as not to detract from the privilege and happiness of the exaltation. So far as exaltation is suitable for a creature, and is indeed a privilege and happiness to the creature, it is given to the creature and nothing taken from it. That only is removed that should carry any shadow of what belongs only to the Creator, and which might make the difference between the Creator and creature, and its absolute, infinite dependence on the Creator less manifest. That humiliation only is brought with the

exaltation that is suitable to that great humility that becomes the creature before the Creator. This humiliation does not detract any thing from the happiness of elect holy creatures, but adds to it, for it gratifies that humble disposition that they are of, it is exceeding sweet and delightful to them to be humbled and abased before God, to cast down their crowns at his feet as the four and twenty elders do in Rev. iv. 10.——And to abase themselves, and appear nothing, and ascribe all power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing to him. They will delight more in seeing God exalted than themselves, and they will not look on themselves the less honoured because that God appears to be all, even in their exaltation, but the more. These creatures that are most exalted will delight most in being abased before God, for they will excel in humility as much as in dignity and glory, as has been elsewhere observed. The man, Christ Jesus, who is the head of all creatures, is the most humble of all creatures. That in Matth. xviii. 4, "Whosoever therefore humbleth himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven, is true, with respect to the humility that they exercise, both in this and in another world. They that have most humility in this world, will continue to excel in humility in heaven; and the proposition is reciprocal. They that have the greatest humility, shall be most exalted, and shall be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, and they that are greatest in the kingdom of heaven, are most humble.

Corol. I. What has been said above, confirms the conclusion that some in heaven will be a kind of ministers in that society: teachers; ministers to their knowledge and love, and helpers of their joy, as ministers of the gospel are here.

Corol. II. Hence we may learn the sweet and perfect harmony that will reign throughout that glorious society, and how far those that are lowest will be from envying those that are highest, or the highest from despising the lowest, for the highest shall be made ministers to the happiness of the lowest, and shall be even below them in humility, and the lowest shall have the greatest love to the highest for their superior excellency, and for the greater benefit which they shall receive from their ministration, as it is the disposition of the saints to love and honour their faithful ministers here in this world.

[838] *Angels—why called Thrones, Dominions, Principalities and Powers.* As the angels are made to be employed as the ministers of God's providence of the government of the world, and as they are beings of a limited understanding, and not equally capable of understanding and managing the affairs of the whole universe, or of the whole extent and compass of

divine providence, or of any part indifferently, as they may be of affairs of some particular kind, or system, or series of events, or of some particular part of the universe ; (for it must needs be so with all that are of limited understanding, that they must be more capable of the care and management of things in a certain particular sphere than of any thing indifferently without any fixed limits:) so it is very reasonable to suppose from hence that the different angels are appointed to different kinds of work, and that their ministry more especially respects some certain limited parts of the universality of things which God has in some respect committed to their care, so that over these things they have a ministerial dominion, some of larger and others of lesser extent; some in a more exalted, others a less humble station. So they are a kind of princes under God, over such and such parts of the creation, or within such a certain sphere. Though their dominion be only ministerial, (as the dominion of ministers of the gospel, or angels of the churches is,) yet it is very honourable and exalted. It is a very honourable work in which they are employed, an image of the work of the Son of God, as God man, who has the vicegerency of the whole universe, and so they as well as the princes of Israel are called gods, *Elohim*, Ps. xcii. 7. "Worship him, all ye gods," which is rendered by the apostle, "Let all the angels of God worship him." And they are all called "The sons of God," as they are, Job xxxviii. "When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." They may, on this account also, be fitly compared to stars, (as they are here, and also in the song of Deborah, "The stars in their courses fought against Sisera,") not only for their brightness in wisdom and holiness, and for their being the native inhabitants of heaven, and obeying the commands of God, as the stars do, but because they have their particular dominion set them in the lower universe, as the stars have, Job xxxviii. 33. "Canst thou set the dominion thereof in the earth?" And also because they have their certain sphere and course to which they are limited in heaven. These seem in part to be signified by the kings of the earth, that shall bring their honour and glory into the church. They are made chiefly for a ministerial dominion over, and management of, the world of mankind on the earth, as ministering spirits unto Christ; and on the account of their honourable place and trust in heaven, they may be called *ministers of the new earth*, there spoken of in that chapter. God hath concealed the particular spheres of the angels' dominion and ministry, that we might not be tempted to idolatry. They, therefore, that worship angels under a notion of such and such angels having a superintendency over such particular persons or affairs, intrude into those things that they have not seen.

It is not reasonable to suppose that the angels are called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, merely for the honour they have in their great abilities and excellent qualifications, for the words do properly denote *rule* and *authority*. Earthly rulers are called principalities and powers. Tit. iii. 1. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates."

[937] *Angels elect—their dependence on Christ.*

Two questions may be raised with respect to the elect angels.

Ques. I. How far the elect angels are dependent on Christ for eternal life?

Ans. I. Probably the service appointed them as the great trial of their obedience, was serving Christ, or ministering to him in his great work that he had undertaken with respect to mankind.

II. When Lucifer rebelled and set up himself as a head in opposition to God and Christ, and drew away a great number of the angels after him, Christ, the Son of God, manifested himself as an opposite head, and appeared graciously to dissuade and restrain by his grace the elect angels from hearkening to Lucifer's temptation, so that they were upheld and preserved from eternal destruction at this time of great danger by the free and sovereign distinguishing grace of Christ. Herein Christ was the Saviour of the elect angels, for though he did not save them as he did elect men from the ruin they had already deserved, and were condemned to, and the miserable state they were already in, yet he saved them from eternal destruction they were in great danger of, and otherwise would have fallen into with the other angels. The elect angels joined with him, the glorious Michael, as their Captain, while the other angels hearkened to Lucifer and joined with him, and then was that literally true that was fulfilled afterwards figuratively. Rev. xii. "When there was war in heaven, Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not, neither was there place found any more in heaven, and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent called the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world, he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him."

III. They were dependent on the sovereign grace of Christ to uphold them and assist them in this service, and to keep them from ruining themselves, as the fallen angels had done; by the fall of the angels, especially of Lucifer, the greatest, brightest, and most intelligent of all creatures, they were taught their own emptiness and insufficiency for themselves, and were led humbly in a self-diffidence to look to Christ, to seek to him, and depend on him, in whom it pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell to preserve them. So that they all along hung upon him. Through

the whole course of their obedience during their time of tria, having no absolute promise, as believers in Christ have amongst men of perseverance in one act of faith, but only God the Father had revealed to them that if they were preserved, it must be by influence and help from his Son, and also made known to them the infinite riches of the grace of his Son, and its sufficiency for them, and given them experience of it in preserving them when the other angels fell, and God directed them to seek to his Son for help. But this humble dependence was part of their duty or work by which they were to obtain eternal life, and it was not as it is with men, the fruit of the purchase of life already made, the first act of which entitles to all other fruits of this purchase through eternity. Thus the angels did depend on Christ, and they were supported by strength and grace from him freely communicated; it was sovereign grace that he was not obliged to afford them, for he was not obliged to afford them any more grace than he did the angels that fell, so that it can truly be said of the angels, that they have eternal life by sovereign grace through Christ in a way of self-emptiness, self-diffidence, and humble dependence on him. So far is the way of the elect angels' receiving eternal life like that of elect men's receiving of it.

IV. Christ is their Judge, and they actually receive their reward at his hands as their Judge, as I have elsewhere shown.

V. They not only have the reward of eternal life adjudged to them by Christ, but actually, continually, and eternally derive it from him as their head of life and divine influence, the Spirit is given them them through him.

VI. They have their happiness in him in this brightness of God's glory and express image. It is that they behold the glory and love of God, and so have eternal life in the enjoyment of God. Thus Christ is the tree of life in paradise, on whose fruit all its inhabitants live to all eternity, and the Lamb is the light of that glorious city.

Ques. II. How far the angels are dependent on Christ as God man, and have benefit by his incarnation, sufferings, and exaltation, and the work of redemption that he wrought out for mankind?

Ans. I. The work of redemption is their end; they were created to be subservient to Christ in this affair.

II. Their work and service that was appointed them, that was the trial of their obedience, was to serve Christ and his elect people in this affair, and it was by obeying Christ as his servants in this affair, that they actually obtained eternal life.

III. Especially did the angels obtain life by attending on Christ, and being faithful to him during the time of his humiliation, which was the last, and most trying part of their obedience.

IV. The Lord Jesus Christ God man is the Judge of the angels that gives them the reward of eternal life. They did not enjoy perfect rest till he descended and confirmed them, so that the angels, as well as men, have rest in Christ God man. (See the next.)

V. They have this benefit by the incarnation of Christ, that thereby God is immediately united with a creature, and so is nearer to them, whereby they are under infinitely greater advantages to have the full enjoyment of God.

VI. Jesus Christ God man is he through whom, and in whom, they enjoy the blessedness of the reward of eternal life, both as the Head of influence through whom they have the Spirit, and also as in Christ God man they behold God's glory, and have the manifestations of his love.

VII. As the perfections of God are manifested to all creatures, both men and angels, by the fruits of those perfections, i. e. by God's works, (the wisdom of God appears by his wise works, and his power by his powerful works; his holiness and justice by his holy and just acts, and his grace and love by the acts and works of grace and love,) so the glorious angels have the greatest manifestations of the glory of God by what they see in the work of man's redemption, and especially in the death and sufferings of Christ.

[940] The elect angels have greatly increased both in holiness and happiness, since the fall of those angels that fell, and are immensely more holy than ever Lucifer and his angels were; for perfection in holiness, i. e. a sinless perfection, is not such in those that are finite, but that it admits of infinite degrees. The fall of the angels laid a foundation for the greater holiness of the elect angels, as it increased their knowledge of God and themselves, gave them the knowledge of good and evil, and was a means of their being emptied of themselves and brought low in humility, and they increased in holiness by persevering in obedience. What they behold of the glory of God in the face of Christ as men's Redeemer, and especially in Christ's humiliation, greatly increased their holiness; and their obedience, through that last and greatest trial, contributed above all things to an increase of their holiness. This further shows how the elect angels are dependent on Christ God man.

[941] Christ's humiliation many ways laid a foundation for the humiliation of all elect creatures. By seeing one infinitely above them descending so low, and abasing himself so much, they are abundantly made sensible how no abasement is too great for them. Lucifer thought what God required of him too great an abasement for so high and worthy a creature as he; but in Christ Jesus they see one infinitely higher than he descending

vastly lower than was required of him. It tends to humble the angels, and to set them for ever at an immense distance from any thought that any thing that God can require of them can be too great an abasement for them; and then it tended to humble them, as this person that appeared in such meanness, and in so despicable a state, is appointed to be their Lord and their God, and as they were required humbly to minister to him in his greatest abasement. It tends to abase elect men two ways.

1. As here is the example of the voluntary humiliation of one infinitely more worthy than they; and,

2. As here is the greatest manifestation of the evil, dreadful nature of sin, and particularly as here is the effects of their sin. Here appears the venomous nature of their corruption, as it aims at the life of God, and here appears the infinite greatness of its demerit in such sufferings of a person of infinite glory. So that all elect creatures are as it were humbled and abased in their head. This shows further how the elect angels are dependent on Christ God man.

[938] *Heaven—How the elect angels know good and evil.* It is a thing supposed, without proof, that the glorious inhabitants of heaven never felt any such thing as *trouble* or *uneasiness* of any kind. Their present innocency and holiness does not prove it. God may suffer innocent creatures to be in trouble for their greater happiness. The nature and end of that place of glory does not prove it, for if that did not hinder *sin* from entering, neither will it necessarily hinder *trouble* from entering there.

The elect angels probably felt great fear at the time of the revolt of Lucifer and the angels that followed him. They were then probably the subjects of great surprise, and a great sense of their own danger of falling likewise, and when they saw the wrath of God executed on the fallen angels, which they had no certain promise that they should not suffer also by their own disobedience, being not yet confirmed, it probably struck them with fear. And the highest heavens was not a place of such happiness and rest before Christ's ascension as it was afterwards; for the angels were not till then confirmed. So that it was in Christ God man that the angels have found rest. The angels, therefore, have this to sweeten their safety and rest, that they have it after they have known what it is to be in great danger, and to be distressed with fear.

[1098] That the angels in the times of the Old Testament did not fully understand the counsels and designs of God with regard to men's redemption, may be argued from that text, Isai. lxiv. 4. "For since the beginning of the world they have not heard (*men* is not in the original,) nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God! beside thee, what he hath prepared for him that

waiteth for him." In the original, what "he hath *made* or *done* for him that waiteth for him." It is rendered in the margin, "*hath seen a God besides thee which doth so for him that waiteth for him.*" But our translation gives the sense more agreeable to the citation of the apostle, 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8, 9. It is manifest by this text, if we take it in a sense agreeable to the apostle's understanding of it, that none of old understood the mystery of man's redemption by Jesus Christ, it never entered into the hearts of any; and if this be the sense, it will follow from the words of the text, not only that it had not entered into the hearts of any of mankind, but also of the angels, for all are expressly excluded but God himself; *none* have heard, seen, or perceived, *O God, beside thee.* The meaning is not only that no works had been already done that ever any had seen or heard of parallel to this work; for if the meaning was, that no works that were *past* had been seen or heard of like this work, those words, *O God, beside thee*, would not be added; for if that were the sense, these words would signify, That, though others had not seen any past works parallel with this, yet God had, which would not have been true; for God himself had not seen any past works parallel with this. The same may also be argued from Eph. iii. 9, 10, 11, compared with Rom. xvi. 25, 26, and Colos. i. 26. Not only are the words of Eph. iii. 10 very manifestly to my present purpose, but those words in the verse preceding are here worthy of remark. *The mystery, which, from the beginning of the world, hath been HID IN GOD;* which seems plainly to imply, that it was a secret which God kept within himself, which was hid and sealed up in the divine understanding, and never had as yet been divulged to any other, which was hid in God's secret counsel, which as yet no other being had ever been made acquainted with; and so the words imply as much as those in the forementioned place in Isaiah, that *none had perceived it beside God.*

[1247] *Angels.* That they are as the nobles and barons of the court of heaven, as dignified servants in the palace of the King of kings, is manifest by Matt. xviii. 10. See my Notes. So in their being called thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers.

[1276] *Angels ignorant of the majesty of the gospel till Christ's coming.*

Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints. To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles: which is Christ in you the hope of glory. Doctor Goodwin says, "This doctrine of the gospel he kept hid and close in his own breast; not a creature knew it; no, not the angels, who were his nearest courtiers and dearest favour-

ites, it lay hid *in God*, Eph. iii. 9, even hid from them, ver. 10. A mystery, which when it should be revealed, should amaze the world, put the angels to school again, as if they had known nothing in comparison of this, wherein they should know over again all those glorious riches which are in God, and that more perfectly and fully than ever yet. And so after they had a little studied the catechism and compendium, there should come out a large volume, a new system of the riches of the glory of God, the mystery of Christ in the text, which is the last edition, also, now set out enlarged, perfected, wherein the large inventory of God's glorious perfections is more fully set down with additions." (Dr. Goodwin's works, vol. i. part iii. p. 64, on Col. i. 26, 27.)

FALL OF THE ANGELS.

[438] So it was also with the angels, their judgment was likewise decreed. Probably they thought it would be degradation and misery to be ministers to a creature of an inferior nature, whom God was about to create, and subjects and servants to one in that nature, not knowing particularly how it was to be, God having only in general revealed it to them. They thought it would be best for themselves to resist, and endeavour to be independent of God's government and ordering; and, having an appetite to their own honour, it overcome holy dispositions, which when once overcome, immediately wholly left them to the full and unrestrained rage of the principles that overcome, and their holy inclination to subjection was greatly damped by their opinion of God, as though he intended to deal unbecomingly by them in subjecting them to one of such a nature, and so it was the more easily overcome.

[320] *Devils.* It seems to me probable that the temptation of the angels, which occasioned their rebellion, was, That when God was about to create man, or had first created him, God declared his decree to the angels that one of that human nature should be his Son, his best beloved, his greatest favourite, and should be united to his Eternal Son, and that he should be their Head and King, that they should be given to him, and should worship him, and be his servants, attendants, and ministers: And God having thus declared his great love to the race of mankind, gave the angels the charge of them as ministering spirits to men. Satan, or Lucifer, or Beelzebub, being the archangel, one of the highest of the angels, could not bear it, thought it below him, and a great debasing of him. So he conceived re-

bellion against the Almighty, and drew away a vast company of the heavenly hosts with him. But he was cast down from the highest pitch of glory to the lowest hell for it, and himself was made an occasion of bringing that to pass which his spirit so rose against, yea, his spite and malice was made an occasion of it, and that same act of his by which he thought he had entirely overthrown the design, and that same person in human nature which they could not bear should rule over them in glory, and should be their King and Head, to communicate happiness to them, by this means proves their King in spite of them, and becomes their Judge; and though they would not be his willing subjects, they shall be his unwilling captives, he shall be their sovereign to make them miserable and pour out his wrath upon them; and mankind whom they so envied and so scorned, are by occasion of them advanced to higher glory and honour, and greater happiness, and more nearly united to God; and though they disdained to be ministering spirits to them, yet now they shall be judged by them as assessors with Jesus Christ.

[833] *Occasion of the fall of the angels.* Christ had his delegated dominion over the world committed to him as soon as the creation of the world was finished; for though Christ did not actually begin the work and business of a Mediator till man had fallen, yet the world, even in its very creation, was designed to be for the use of Christ in the great affair of Redemption, and his purpose in that work wsa the end of the creation, and of all God's providences in it from the beginning. Therefore the government of the world was committed into his hands from the very beginning; for even the very creation was committed into his hands for that reason, as the apostle intimates, Eph. iii. 9, 10. Much more have we reason to think that the disposal of it was committed into his hands when it was made, because it was created for his disposal and use. It was therefore most fit that it should be committed to him, not only in the actual accomplishment of that great work of his, the work of redemption, but also in those antecedent dispensations that were preparatory to it, during that short space of time that was taken up in the preparation before the work of redemption actually began. It was most meet that Christ should have the disposal of those things that were to prepare the way for his own work, otherwise the work would not wholly be in his hands; for the accomplishing of the work itself, so as best to suit his own purpose and pleasure, depends in a great measure on the preparation that was made for it, and so there is the same reason that the preparation should be in his hands as the

work itself. There is the same reason, that those things that are without the limits of the work itself, *as to time*, should be in the hands of Christ, because of the relation they have to that work, as that those things that are without the limits of the work itself, *as to place*, and *nature*, and *order of being*, should be in his hands; as the angels in heaven, and indeed all the works of God that were before the fall of man, were parts of the work of preparation for the work of Redemption. The creation itself was so; and for this reason the creation of the world was committed into his hands; and there is no reason to suppose that one part of this work of preparation was committed into Christ's hands, because it was a preparation for his work, and not other parts of the preparation for the same work. All things are for Christ, for his use; and therefore God left it with him to prepare all things for his own use, that in every thing he might have the pre-eminence, and that in him might all fullness dwell, a perfect sufficiency every way for the design that he had to accomplish; and therefore by the will and disposition of the Father, all things were made by him, and all things consist by him, and he was made Head over all things to the church, and for the purposes of the work of redemption that he was to accomplish for the church. Colos. i. 16, 17, 18, 19. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things are created by him and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, and he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence; for it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." Eph. i. 22. "And hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church. It is manifest by these things that not only the creation of the world, but the upholding and government of the world were committed into the hands of Christ, and doubtless it was so from the beginning. As Christ's delegated dominion over the world will not be at an end till his use of it is finished, and he has completed that work in which its great use consists, and has fully obtained his end of it, which will be at the *end of the world*, when he will *deliver up* THAT *kingdom to the Father*. So doubtless the delegated dominion over the world began when his use of it began, which was at the *beginning of the world*, or as soon as the world was finished, and then *the kingdom was committed to him of the Father.*

[936] *Fall of the angels.—Satan, the prince of the devils.* It seems manifest by the scripture, that there is one of the devils

that is vastly superior to all the rest. His vast superiority appears in his being so very often spoken of singly, as the grand enemy of God and mankind, the grand adversary, the accuser of the brethren, and the great destroyer. He is more frequently spoken of singly, in scripture, than *devils* are spoken of in the plural number, as though he were more than all the rest. He seems commonly in scripture to be spoken of *instar omnium*. It seems to be from his great superiority above all the rest, that he is so often spoken of under so many peculiar names that are never found in the plural number, as *Satan*, *Diabolos*, *Beelzebub*, *Lucifer*, *The Dragon*, *The Old Serpent*, *The Wicked One*, *The God of this world*, *The Prince of this world*, John xii. 31, *The Prince of the power of the air*, *The Accuser of the brethren*, *The Tempter*, *The Adversary*, *Abaddon*, *Apollyon*, *The Enemy*, *and The Avenger*. His strength and subtilty are very great indeed; so much superior to the rest, that he maintains a dominion over them, and is able to govern and manage them, that they durst not raise rebellion against him, agreeble to Job xli. 25, "When he raiseth up himself the mighty are afraid." But he is king in hell, the prince of the devils; as Leviathan is said, Job xli. 34, to be "king over all the children of pride." See Rev. ix. 11. All the rest of the devils are his servants, his wretched slaves, they are spoken of as his possession, Matth. xxv. 41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the *Devil and* HIS *angels*." They are his attendants and possession, as the good angels are Christ's attendants and possession, Rev. xii. 7. "And there was war in heaven: *Michael* and *his* angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought, and *his* angels."

This angel, before his fall, was the chief of all the angels, of greatest natural capacity, strength, and wisdom, and highest in honour and dignity, the brighest of all those stars of heaven, as is signified by what is said of him, under that type of him, the king of Babylon, Isai. xiv. 12, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!" This signifies his outshining all the other stars, as the morning star outshines the rest. It is yet more manifest from what is said of the king of Tyrus, as a type of the Devil, in Ezek. xxviii. 12—19. Here I would observe several things. (See Note on the place.)

I. It is exceeding manifest that the king of Tyrus is here spoken of as a type of the Devil, or the prince of the angels, or cherubim that fell.

1. Because he is here expressly called an *Angel* or *Cherub*, once and again, ver. 14. 16. And is spoken of as a *fallen cherub*.

2. He is spoken of as having been in heaven under three different names; by which names heaven is often called in scripture, viz. *Eden, The Garden of God*, or *the Paradise of God*; ver. 13, *The Holy mountain of God*, ver. 14 and 16; and *The Sanctuary*, ver. 18.

3. He is spoken of as having been in a most happy state in the paradise of God, and holy mountain of God, in great honour and beauty, and pleasure.

4. He is spoken of as in his first estate, or the state wherein he was created, to be perfectly *free from sin*, but afterwards *falling by sin*. Ver. 15. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways, from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."

5. The iniquity by which he fell was *pride*, or his being lifted up by reason of his superlative beauty and brightness. Ver. 17. "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty. Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness."

6. He is represented as being cast out of heaven, and cast down to the earth for his sin. Ver. 16. "Therefore I will cast thee, as profane, out of the mountain of God, and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the flames of fire." Ver. 17. "I will cast thee to the ground."

7. He is represented as being destroyed by fire here, in this earthly world. Ver. 18. "I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee: it shall devour thee; and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the midst of all that behold thee."

8. His great wisdom is spoken of as being corrupted by sin, i. e., turned into a wicked craftiness. Ver. 17. "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom because of thy brightness." If the king of Tyrus were not here expressly called "*a Cherub*," "*in the Paradise of God*," and "*in God's holy mountain*;" by which it is most evident that he is spoken of as *a type* of a cherub in the paradise of God; yet I say if it had not been so, the matter would have been very plain, for the things here spoken of cannot be applied to the king of Tyrus with any beauty, nor without the utmost shining, any other way than as a type of the devil that was once a glorious angel in paradise. For how could it be said of the king of Tyrus, in any other sense, but as a type of the anointed angel, that he had been in God's holy mountain, and in Eden, the garden of God, and in God's sanctuary, and there been first perfect in his ways? (For the original word is a kind of expression that is ever used in scripture to signify *holiness*, or *moral perfection*.) And how in any other sense was he afterwards cast, as profane, out of the mountain of God?

II. It is evident that this Cherub or Angel is spoken of as the highest of all the angels. This is evident by several things:

1. He is called the *anointed* cherub. This expression alone shows him to have sat higher than any other cherub; for his being *anointed*, must signify his being distinguished from all others. Anointing of old was used as a note of distinction, to show that that person was marked out and distinguished from all the rest for a higher dignity. *The Lord's anointed*, in Israel, was he that God of his mere good pleasure had appointed to the chief dignity in Israel; so the Lord's anointed, among the cherubim, is the cherub that God had appointed to the highest dignity of all. It is said, ver. 14, "Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so;" i. e. plainly, "It has been my pleasure to set thee, by my anointing, in the highest dignity of all."

2. He is called, "The cherub *that covereth*, on God's holy mountain," ver. 14, and "The *covering* cherub, in the midst of the flames of fire," ver. 16. In which there seems to be a reference to the cherubim in the temple in the holy of holies, next to the throne of God that covered the throne with their wings. Exod. xxv. 19, 20, and xxvii. 9. From this it appears, that by *the covering cherub* is meant the cherub next to the throne of God himself, having a place *in the very holy of holies*. There were represented two cherubim that covered the mercy-seat in the temple, that are called by the apostle, "cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy-seat," Heb. ix. 5, which represent the great dignity and honour of the cherubim that are next to God's throne, and are *covering cherubim*. But before the fall of this cherub he is spoken of as being alone entitled to this great honour and nearness to God's throne in heaven, that he was anointed to be above his fellows. (See Note on Matth. xviii. 10.)

3. This covering cherub is here spoken of as the top of all the creation, or the summit and height of all creature perfection in wisdom and beauty. Ver. 12. "Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom and perfect beauty." He is spoken of not only as being in the midst of many things that are very bright and beautiful, ver. 13, 14, and as walking up and down among them, but as having the sum of all their beauty completed, perfected, and sealed up in himself. [It seems implied, that no being is stronger than Beelzebub, and able to bind him but God himself. Matth. xii. 29, with the context.]

Corol. I. Hence learn that Satan before his fall was the *Messiah* or *Christ*, as he was the *anointed*. The word *anointed* is radically the same in Hebrew as the word *Messiah:* So that in this respect our Jesus is exalted into his place in heaven.

Corol. II. These things show another thing, wherein Jesus is exalted into the place of Lucifer; that whereas he had the honour to dwell in the holy of holies continually, so Jesus is

there entered, not as the high priests of old, but to be there continually, but in this respect is exalted higher than Lucifer ever was; that whereas Lucifer was only near the throne, or kneeling on the mercy-seat in humble posture, covering it with his wings, Jesus is admitted to sit down for ever with God on the throne.

Corol. III. From what is said in this passage of scripture, we may learn that the angels were created *in time*. Though we have no particular account of their creation in the story of Moses, we read here, once and again, of the day wherein this Anointed Cherub was created, ver. 13. 15. This is also implied in Gen. ii. 1. "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all *the hosts* of them." The angels are often in scripture spoken of as *the host* of heaven, and the angels are expressly spoken of as *created* by Christ, in Col. i. 16. "For by him were all things created that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created by him, and for him." So Ps. civ. 4. "Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire;" which is meant of proper angels, as appears by Heb. i. 7. It appears also further, because they are called *the sons of God*, in Job xxxviii., which cannot be meant by eternal generation, for so Christ is God's only begotten Son. See Ps. cxlviii. 2, 3, 4, 5.

Corol. IV. In another respect also Jesus succeeds Lucifer, viz. in being the *Covering* Cherub. The word translated *cover*, often and commonly signifies *to protect*. It was committed to this archangel especially, to have the care of protecting the beloved race, elect man, that was God's jewel, his first fruits, his precious treasure, laid up in God's ark, or cabinet, hid in the secret of his presence. That was the great business the angels were made for, and therefore was especially committed to the head of the angels. But he fell from his innocency and dignity, and Jesus in his stead becomes the Cherub that covereth, the great Protector and Saviour of elect man, that gathereth them as a hen her chickens under her wings.

Corol. V. Lucifer, while a holy angel, in having the excellency of all those glorious things that were about him, all summed up in him, was a type of Christ, in whom all the glory and excellency of all elect creatures is more properly summed, as the head and foundation of all, just as the brightness of all, that reflects the light of the sun, is summed up in the sun.

And as the Devil was the highest of all the angels, so he was the very highest of all God's creatures; he was the top and crown of the whole creation; he was the brightest part of the heaven of heavens, that brightest part of all the creation; he was the head of the angels, that most noble rank of all created beings; and, therefore, when spoken of under that type of him, the *Behemoth*,

he is said to be "the chief of the ways of God," Job xl. 19. And since it is revealed that there is a certain order and government among the angels, the superior angels having some kind of authority over others that are of lower rank; and since Lucifer was the chief of them all, we may suppose that he was the head of the whole society, the captain of the whole host. He was the archangel, the prince of the angels, and all did obeisance unto him. And as the angels, as the ministers of God's providence, have a certain superintendency and rule over the world, or at least over some parts of it that God has committed to their care, hence they are called *thrones*, *dominions*, *principalities*, and *powers*. Therefore, seeing Lucifer was the head, and captain, and prince of all, and the highest creature in the whole universe, we may suppose that he had, as God's chief servant, and the grand minister of his providence, and the top of the creation, in some respect committed to him power, dominion, and principality over the whole creation, and all the kingdom of providence; and as all the angels are called *the sons of God*, Lucifer was his first born, and was the first-born of every creature. But when it was revealed to him, high and glorious as he was, that he must be a ministering spirit to the race of mankind which he had seen newly created, which appeared so feeble, mean, and despicable, so vastly inferior, not only to him, the prince of the angels, and head of the created universe, but also to the inferior angels, and that he must be subject to one of that race that should hereafter be born, he could not bear it. This occasioned his fall; and now he, with the other angels whom he drew away with him, are fallen, and elect men are translated to supply their places, and are exalted vastly higher in heaven than they. And the Man Jesus Christ, the Chief, and Prince, and Captain of all elect men, is translated and set in the throne that Lucifer, the chief and prince of the angels left, to be the Head of the angels in his stead, the head of principality and power, that all the angels might do obeisance to him; for God said, "Let all the angels of God worship him;" and God made him his first-born instead of Lucifer, higher than all those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, and made him, yea, made him in his stead the first-born of every creature, or of the whole creation, and made him also in his stead the bright and morning Star, and Head, and Prince of the universe; yea, gave this honour, dignity, and power unto him, in an unspeakably higher and more glorious manner than ever he had done to Lucifer, and appointed him to conquer, subdue, and execute vengeance upon that great rebel. Lucifer aspired to be "like the Most High," but God exalted one of mankind, the race that he envied, and, from envy to whom, he rebelled against God, to be indeed like the Most High, to a personal union with the eternal Son of God, and

exalted him in this union to proper divine honour and dignity, set him at his own right hand on his own throne, and committed to him proper divine power and authority, constituting him as God man, the supreme, absolute, and universal Lord of the universe, and Judge of every creature, the darling of the whole creation, the brightness of God's glory, and express image of his person; as, in his divine nature, he is the NATURAL IMAGE of God. God, in his providence, was pleased thus to show the emptiness and vanity of the creature, by suffering the insufficiency of the highest and most glorious of all creatures, the head and crown of the whole creation, to appear, by his sudden fall from his glori ous height into the lowest depth of hatefulness, deformity, and misery. God's design was first to show the creature's emptiness in itself, and then to fill it with himself in eternal, unalterable fullness and glory. To show the emptiness of the creature, the old creation, or the old heavens and earth, were to go to ruin and perish, in some sense, or at least all was to be emptied. Great part of the old creation was actually to sink into total and eternal perdition, as fallen angels and some of fallen men, all mankind was in a sense to be totally; though some of them were to be re stored, after they had sensibly been emptied of themselves. And though the highest heaven never was to be destroyed, yet, before it should have its consummate and immutable glory, the highest and most glorious part of it was to perish, and a considerable part of the glorious heavenly inhabitants, and the rest were hereby to be brought to see their own emptiness and utter insufficiency, and so as it were to perish or die as to self-dependence and all self-fullness, and to be brought to an entire dependence on the sovereign grace and all-sufficiency of God to be communicated to them by his Son as their head. And thus the whole old creation, both heaven and earth, as to all its natural glory and creature-fullness, was to be pulled down; and thus, way was to be made for the creation of the new heavens and new earth, or the setting forth of the whole elect universe in its consummate, everlasting, immutable, glory in the fullness of God, in a great, most conspicuous, immediate, and universal dependence on his power and sovereign grace, and also on the glorious and infinitely excellent nature and essence of God, as the infinite fountain of glory and love; the beholding and enjoying of which, and union with which, being the elect creature's all in all, all its strength, all its beauty, all its life, its fruit, its honour, its blessedness.

Corol. I. From the last paragraph. This may show us the necessity of a work of *Humiliation* in men as the necessity of man's being emptied of himself in order to a partaking of the benefits of the new creation, and the redemption of Jesus Christ.

Corol. II. This shows that even the elect angels have their eternal life in a way of *Humiliation*, and also dependence on sovereign grace, as well as elect men, though not the same sort of humiliation and dependence in all respects.

To show the emptiness of all creatures in themselves, the ruin of the creation began in heaven, in the very best and highest part of the creation, and in the highest creature in it, the crown and glory of the whole creation; because it was the will of God that a mere creature should not be the head of the creation, but a divine person, and that he should be the crown and glory of the creation. Heaven was the first of the creation that was subject to ruin, and it shall be the last part that shall be renewed or amended by a new creation. There are two parts of the creation connected with the work of redemption; one is the world of man, and that is this visible world; and the other is the world of angels, and that is heaven. The whole is to be changed: the former shall be destroyed, because all men fell, and only an elect number are saved out of it; the other shall not be destroyed, because all the angels did not fall, those that stood supported it, a blessing was left in it, and therefore God said, Destroy it not, and therefore the change that is to be made in that is to be of a contrary nature to destruction; it is to be made infinitely more glorious by a new creation. And therefore God's dealings with respect to the world of angels, are contrary to his dealings with the world of men. The world of men is to be destroyed, and therefore, elect men are taken out of it, and carried into the world of angels, and reprobate men left in it to perish and sink with it. The world of angels is not to be destroyed, but renewed and glorified; and therefore, reprobate angels are taken out of it, and cast into the world of men, and elect angels are kept in it, to be renewed and glorified with it.

Because God's design was to show the emptiness of the creature, and its exceeding insufficiency, therefore God suffered both angels and men quickly to fall, and the old creation quickly to go to ruin.

Some may be ready to think it to be incredible, and what the wisdom of the Creator would not suffer, that the most glorious of all his creatures should fall and be eternally ruined, or that it should be so that the elect angels, those that are beloved of God, should none of them be of equal strength and largeness of capacity with the devil. To this I would say,

1. That the man Christ Jesus that is exalted into the place of Lucifer in heaven, though he be of a rank of creatures of a nature far inferior in capacity to that of the angels, and especially far below the highest of all the angels, yet God can, and hath ex-

alted that little worm of littleness and weakness to an immensely greater capacity, dignity, and glory, than Lucifer ever had.

2. God can reward the elect angels that originally are inferior to Lucifer, and can increase their capacity and strength; and there is no reason to think but that he has rewarded, or will reward, elect angels, as well as elect men, with a great exaltation of their nature. And probably Christ did, at his ascension, exalt the natures of some of them at least, so as to exceed all that ever Lucifer had. It seems probable, by Rev. xx. at the beginning; and probably at the day of judgment, the natures of all the angels will be so exalted as to be above the devil in capacity.

Seeing that this was the case with the devil, that before his fall he was the head of the creation, the captain and prince of the angels, and had some kind of superintendency over the whole universe, and seeing his sin was his pride, and affecting to be like the Most High, no wonder that he seeks to reign as god of this world, and affects to be worshipped as God.

That the devil so restlessly endeavours to set up himself in this world, and maintain his dominion here, and to oppose God, and fight against him to the procuring his own continual disappointment and vexation, and to work out his own misery, and at last to bring on his own head his own greatest torment, his everlasting and consummate misery, is the fruit of a curse that God has laid him under for his first ambition, and envy, and opposition to God in heaven. He is therefore made a perfect slave to those lusts that reign over him, and torment him, and will pull down on him eternal destruction.

[939] *Occasion of the fall of the angels.* We cannot but suppose that it was made known to the angels, at their first creation, that they were to be ministering spirits to men, and to serve the Son of God in that way, by ministering to them as those that were peculiarly beloved of him, because this was their proper business for which they were made; this was the end of their creation. It is not to be supposed that seeing they were intelligent creatures, that were to answer the end of their beings as voluntary agents, or as willingly falling in with the design of their Creator, that God would make them, and not make known to them what they were made for, when he entered into covenant with them, and established the conditions of their eternal happiness, and especially when they were admiring spectators of the creation of this beloved creature for whose good they were made, and this visible world that God made for his habitation. Seeing God made the angels for *a special service*, it is reasonable to suppose that *the faithfulness of the angels in that special service* must be the condition of their reward or wages; and if this was the great condition

of their reward, then we may infer that it was their violating this law, and refusing and failing of this condition, which was that by which they fell. Hence we may infer, that the occasion of their fall was *God's revealing this their end and special service to them*, and *their not complying with it.* That must be the occasion of their fall.

COROL. *Confirmation of the angels at Christ's ascension.*

Hence it is rendered exceedingly probable that the angels were not confirmed till Christ's ascension. For, by what has been now said, it appears that the proper condition of their reward or wages must be *their faithfulness in that special service for which God made them*, or which was the end of their being; but that was to be ministering spirits to Christ in the great work of his exalting and glorifying beloved mankind. But the angels had not any great opportunity to do this business till this work of Christ's glorifying mankind had been carried on considerably in the world, nor had they the proper and chief trial whether they would submit to that service of being subservient to Christ in the work of redemption of fallen men, till that work of redemption was wrought, and Christ had gone through his humiliation, and it was seen whether they would submit to serve, obey, and adore their appointed Head and King in his abject meanness, and when set at nought and abased to hell for beloved, though sinful, vile men.

[1057] *Occasion of the fall of the angels.* How it is agreeable to the opinions of many divines that their refusing to be ministering spirits to beings of inferior rank, and to be subject to Jesus Christ in our nature, when the design of his incarnation was first revealed in heaven, and how that as man he was to be the head of the angels; see Mr. Charles Owen's Wonders of Redeeming Love, p. 74, &c. in our young people's library. See also Mr. Glass's Notes on Scripture Texts, Num. 3, p. 1—7.

[1261] *Occasion of the fall of the angels.* It is supposed by some, and very rationally and probably by Zanchius, whom I account the best of protestant writers in his judgment, and likewise by Suarez, the best of the school-men, that upon the very setting up, or at least upon the first notice that the angels had of the setting up of a kingdom for the man Christ Jesus, predestinated for to come, (and this, whether it was without the fall predestinated as some suppose, or upon supposition of the fall as others, yet so much might be revealed to them,) and of the divine purpose that the human nature was to be assumed by, and united to, the second person of the Trinity, and that he was to be the head of all principality and power, and that angels and men should have their grace from him; it is supposed, I say, that on this being declared to be the will of God, that the rejection of this kingdom on the part of many of the an-

gels, and their refusing to be subject unto Christ, as man thus assumed, was their first sin. And now in opposition hereunto they did set up another kingdom against him. Thus those writers whom I have mentioned do think; and they allege that place in the Epistle of Jude, ver. 6, where, the sin of the angels being described, it is said they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, (which, say they, is not there brought in as their punishment,) they left the station God had set them in, and they left their dwelling in heaven to set up a kingdom here below in opposition to Christ, and so to have an independent kingdom of themselves; for which God hath condemned them into eternal torments, and to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment, 2 Peter ii. 4. And to set up this great kingdom is their business, and therefore they do now associate themselves together, not out of love, but as becometh rational creatures that would drive on a project and design. These writers not only go upon this place in Jude, but on that in John viii. 44, where Christ lays open both the devil's sin, and the sin of the Jews. The sin of the Jews was this, they would not receive that truth which Christ had delivered to them, as he tells them, ver. 45, "Because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not;" and not receiving it, they sought to kill him. Now, if you ask what that truth was which Christ had so much inculcated upon them, you shall see, ver. 25, what it is. They asked him there, *Who he was;* "Even the same," saith he, "that I have told you from the beginning, THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD. If the Son make you free, you shall be free indeed," ver 36. This was the great truth that these Jews would not receive. Now he tells them, likewise, ver. 44, that Satan, their father, the devil, abode not in the truth. "He was the first, saith he, that opposed and contradicted this great truth, and would not be subject to God who revealed this, nor would he accept, or embrace, or continue, or stand; he would quit heaven first; and so from hence come to be a murderer, a hater of this man Christ Jesus, and of this kingdom, and of mankind. For he that hateth God, or he that hateth Christ, he is, in what in him lieth, a murderer of him, and he showed it in falling upon man. And they back it with this reason, why it should be so meant, because, otherwise the devil's sin which he compares them to, had not been so great as theirs. There had not been a likeness between the sin of the one and that of the other; his sin would have been only telling a lie, a lie merely in speech, and theirs had been a refusing that great truth, JESUS CHRIST IS THE MESSIAH AND HEAD; and so the devil's sin would have been less than theirs. Whereas he is made the great father of this great lie, of this great stubbornness to receive Christ, and to contradict this truth; and this, saith he, he

hath opposed from the beginning with all his might, and he setteth your hearts at work to kill me. But I say I will not stand upon this, because I only deliver it as that which is the opinion of some, and hath some probability. However, this is certain, whatsoever his sin was, he hath now, being fallen, set up his kingdom in a special manner against Christ; and so Christ hath been the great stumbling-stone, and angels fall upon it, and men fall upon it. So that indeed the first quarrel was laid in this; God himself proclaimed it at the very beginning. "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head;" which, though spoken to the serpent, comes in by way of curse, as striking at the very spirit of the devil's sin. "He shall break thy head," saith he. "Thou wouldest have lifted up thyself. He shall crush thee." God, I say, proclaimed the war, and the quarrel hath continued from the beginning of the world to this day, and will do, till Satan be put out of the air, for so long he is to have his kingdom, though Christ beateth him out of it every day in the world, and so will continue to do till he hath won the world from him, and then he will chain him up in the bottomless pit. This from Dr. Goodwin, vol. 1 of his works, part ii. p. 32, 33.

[1266] *Fall of the angels.* The same Dr. Goodwin, in the 2d vol. of his works, in his Discourse on the Knowledge of God the Father, and of his Son Jesus Christ, speaking of the pride of some, has these words: "A lower degree of accursed pride fell into the heart of the devil himself, whose sin in his first apostatizing from God, is conceived to be a stomaching that man should be one day advanced unto the hypostical union, and be one person with the Son of God, whose proud angelical nature (then in actual existence, *the highest of creatures,)* could not brook."

THE DEVIL.

[48] Seeing the devil is so cunning and subtil, it may seem a paradox why he will endeavour to frustrate the designs of an Omniscient Being, or to pretend to controvert him that is omnipotent, and will not suffer any thing but what is for his own glory, seeing that God turns every thing he does to the greater and more illustrious advancement of his own honour. And seeing he has experience of it, for so long a time, all his deep laid contrivances have at last come out to his own overthrow, and the work has been directly contrary to his design. To this I say, that although the devil be exceeding crafty and subtil, yet he is one of the greatest fools and blockheads in the world, as the subtilest of wicked men are. Sin is of such a nature, that it strangely infatu-

ates and stultifies the mind. Men deliberately choose eternal torments rather than miss of their pleasure of a few days; and to esteem a little silver and gold above eternal happiness, makes men choose a few minutes pleasure, though eternal misery be joined thereunto, rather than not have it; this do the cunningest of wicked men. Sin has the same effect on the devils to make them act like fools, and so much the more as it is greater in them than in others. The devil acts here according to his deliberate judgment, being driven on to his own inexpressible torment by the fury of sin, malice, revenge, and pride, and is so entirely under the government of malice, that although he never attempted any thing against God but he was disappointed, yet he cannot bear to be quiet and refrain from exercising himself with all his might and subtilty against the increase of holiness; though, if he considered, he might know that it will turn to its advantage.

[296] *Devils.*—It is probable one reason why men have the offer of a Saviour, and the devils never had, was because their sin was attended with that malice, and spite, and haughty scornfulness that was equivalent to that sin against the Holy Ghost. Their sin was a downright spiteful rebellion, and a direct malicious war against God, a scorn of subjection, and a proud seeking of his throne.

[353] *Angels.*—The fall and misery of the rebel angels contributes exceedingly to the happiness of the faithful angels; it greatly exalts and gives life to their joy, their love, and admiration, and praise; not, however, by any pleasure they take in their misery, but by seeing the miserable state of those of the same kind, from whom they are distinguished by God's electing love, which leads them to reflect what evil they have escaped, by withstanding the temptation of the chief of the rebel angels.

CONFIRMATION OF THE ANGELS.

[442] *See Angels.*

[515] The fall of the angels that fell, was a great establishment and confirmation to the angels that stood. They resisted a great temptation by which the rest fell, whatever that temptation was, and they resisted the entreaties of the ringleaders which drew away multitudes: and the resisting and overcoming great temptation naturally tends greatly to confirm in righteousness. And probably they had been engaged on God's side in resisting those that fell when there was war and rebellion raised in heaven against God. All the hosts of heaven soon divided, some on one

side, and some on the other, and standing for God in opposition and war against those that are his enemies, naturally tended to confirm their friendship to God; and then they saw the dreadful issue of the fallen angels' rebellion, how much it was to their loss; they saw how dreadful the wrath of God was, which tended to make them dread rebellion, and sufficiently careful to avoid it. They now learnt more highly to prize God's favour by seeing the dreadfulness of his displeasure; they now saw more of the beauty of holiness, now they had the deformity of sin to compare it with. But when their time of probation was at an end, and they had the reward of certain confirmation by having eternal life absolutely made certain to them, is in some degree uncertain. However, there are many things that make it look exceedingly probable to me, that whenever this was done, it was through the Son of God, that he was the immediate dispenser of this reward, and that they received it of the Father through him.

1. We have shown before, in No. 320, that it was in contempt of the Son of God that those of them that fell, rebelled; it was because they would not have one in the human nature to rule over them. How congruous, therefore, is it, that those that stood should be dependent on him for their reward of confirmation in contempt of whom the others had rebelled. It was congruous that Christ, who was despised and rejected by a great number of the angels, should become the foundation upon which the rest should be built for eternal life, Ps. cxviii. 22, "The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner."

That God should thus honour his Son in the sight of the angels, who had been thus contemned by the angels that fell in their sight, this makes it seem probable to me that the time of their confirmation was when Jesus Christ ascended into heaven; for,

First. It was *Jesus Christ in the human nature*, that was despised and rejected by the rebelling angels. It was congruous, therefore, that it should be *Jesus Christ in the human nature* that should confirm them that stood.

Secondly. It was also congruous that their confirmation should be deferred till that time, that before they were confirmed they might have a thorough trial of their obedience in that particular, wherein the rebelling angels were guilty, viz. in their submission to Jesus Christ in the human nature. It was congruous therefore that their confirmation should be deferred till they had actually submitted to Christ in man's nature as their King, as they had opportunity to do when Christ in man's nature ascended into heaven.

Thirdly. It seems very congruous that this should be reserved to be part of Christ's exaltation. We often read of Christ's being set over the angels when he ascended, and set at the right hand

of God, and of his being then made head of all principality, and power, that then all things were put under his feet, that then God the Father said "Let all the angels of God worship him." It was very congruous that Christ should have this honour immediately after such great humiliation and sufferings.

Fourthly. It was fit that the angels should be confirmed after they had seen Christ in the flesh, for this was the greatest trial of the angels' obedience that ever was. If the other angels rebelled only at its being *foretold* that such an one in man's nature should rule over them, if that was so great a trial that so many mighty angels fell in it; how great a trial was it when they *actually saw* a poor, obscure, despised, afflicted man, one whom they had just seen so mocked, and spit upon, and crucified, and put to death like a vile malefactor! This was a great trial to those thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, those mighty, glorious, and exalted, spirits, whether or no they would submit to such an one for their sovereign Lord and King.

It was also very fit that God should honour the day of the ascension, and glorious exaltation of his Son, which was a day of such joy to Christ, with joining with it such an occasion of joy to the angels as the reception of their reward of eternal life: that when Christ rejoiced, who had lately endured so much sorrow, the heavenly hosts might rejoice with him.

Object. I. It may be objected, That it was a long time for the Angels to be kept in a state of trial from the beginning of the world till the ascension of Christ, but there might very fitly be a longer time of trial for those mighty spirits than for others.

Object. II. That the angels could not enjoy quiet and undisturbed happiness for all that while, if they were all the time unconfirmed, and did not certainly know that they should not fall.

I answer there was no occasion for any distressing fears, for they never could be guilty of rebellion without knowing, when they were going to commit it, that it was rebellion, and that thereby they should forfeit eternal life, and expose themselves to wrath by the terror of God's covenant; and they could not fall, but it must be their voluntary act; and they had perfect freedom of mind from any lust; and they had been sufficiently warned, and greatly confirmed when the angels fell, so that there was a great probability that they should not fall, though God had not yet declared and promised absolutely that they should not: they were not absolutely certain of it; this was an occasion of joy reserved for the joyful and glorious day of Christ's ascension.

Fifthly. The angels are now confirmed, and have been since Christ's ascension.

I. For Christ, since he appeared in the flesh, gathered together, and united into one society, one family, one body, all the angels and spirits in heaven, and the church on earth. Now it is not to be supposed that part of this body are in a confirmed state, and part still in a state of probation. But,

II. The second argument that the angels are confirmed by Christ, is, that we learn by scripture that Christ is the head of the angels, and that the angels are united to him as part of his body, which holds forth that he is not only their head of *government*, but their head of *communication* too. Christ is therefore the head, from whence the angels receive communication of good: but how well doth this agree with their receiving their reward of obedience from him? God in making Christ head of angels and men, hath made him his dispenser of his benefits to all universally. It is therefore most probable that he, who now dispenses the blessings of the angels' reward to them, is he from whom they first received that reward; that God bestowed it upon them at first through his hands. And this also confirms that the time of the angels' confirmation was at Christ's ascension; for then was he made the Head of the angels, then were *all things* put under his feet.

III. It is most congruous that that person who is to judge the angels, who shall publicly declare the unalterable condemnation of those that fell, and also shall publicly declare the unalterable confirmation of those that stood, should be the same person who acted the part of a Judge before, when they were first confirmed. He that is the Judge of the angels at the last day, publicly before heaven, earth, and hell, to confirm them, is probably the same person who was their judge when they were first confirmed in heaven. The Father hath committed *all judgment* to the Son, and this he did to *Christ God man;* for the committing all judgment to him was done at Christ's first exaltation, and the first fruits of it was probably his confirming the angels, as their Judge.

IV. Christ's being called "*the tree of life*, that groweth in the midst of the paradise of God," Rev. ii. 7. If we consider the use of the tree of life that grew in the midst of the earthly paradise, it was to confirm man in life in case of obedience. If he had stood, he was to have received the reward in that way, by eating the fruit of that tree. Christ, being the tree of life in the heavenly paradise, is so to all the inhabitants of that paradise,

[570] *Confirmation of angels.* We learn by the first chap. of Coloss. 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, and 20th verses, that it was the

design of the Father, that his Son should have the pre-eminence *in all things*, not only with respect to *men*, but with respect to *angels*—thrones, dominions, principalities and powers; and there are some *things* there mentioned, wherein he has the pre-eminence, viz. that they were created by him and for him, and that they consist by him, and that every creature has all fullness in him. Why then hath not Christ the pre-eminence with respect to the angels, as he is the dispenser of God's benefits to them, so that they should have all fullness in him; and particularly that the gift of eternal life should be from his hands? One thing mentioned, wherein God's will that his Son in all things should have the pre-eminence, and that all fullness should dwell in him, is, that by him, he reconciles all things to him, whether they be things in heaven or things on earth. If this be understood only to extend to men; yet, if it be one thing wherein God wills that his Son should in all things have the pre-eminence, and that all fullness should dwell in him, that it is by him that men are brought to an union with God; why would it not be another, that by him the angels also are brought to their confirmed union with him, when it is plainly implied in what the apostle says, that it is the Father's design that Christ should in all things have the pre-eminence with respect to *the angels* as well as with respect to *men*, and that both angels and men should have all their fullness in him? If they have their *fullness* in him, I do not see how it can be otherwise than that they should have their reward and eternal life and blessedness in him.

Again, it is said, 1 Cor. viii. 6, that all things are *of* God the Father, and all things *by* Jesus Christ. God gave the angels their being by Jesus Christ; and I do not see why this would not be another instance of all things being *by* him that he gives them their eternal life by Jesus Christ. This very thing giving eternal life, is one instance of *men's* being by him, and is intended in those words that follow, "and we *by* him."

[591] *Confirmation of the angels.* It is an argument that it was Christ that confirmed the angels, and adjudged to them their reward; that this was an act of judgment; was the proper act of a judge, whereby judgment was passed, whether they had fulfilled the law or no, and were worthy of the reward of it by the tenor of it. But Christ is constituted Universal Judge of all, both angels and men. John v. 22. "For the Father judgeth none, but hath committed all judgment to the Son;" and Christ is not only constituted the judge of *men*, but of *angels*. 1 Cor. vi. 3. "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" If this be meant only of the evil angels, yet that shows that Christ's power of judging is extended beyond man-

kind to the angelic nature; and if he be constituted the Judge of *the evil* angels, that will confirm me that he is of *the good* too, as he is the Judge of both good and bad of mankind, and Christ tells us that *all power* is given him in *heaven* and in *earth*, Matth. xxviii. 18. And we are often particularly told as to the good angels that he is made their Lord and Sovereign, and that they are put under him. The apostle, in Romans xiv. verses 10, 11, and 12, speaking of Christ's being universal Judge, before whose judgment-seat all must stand, and to whom all must give an account, speaks of it as meant by those words in the Old Testament, "As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God;" which place of the Old Testament the apostle refers to in Philip. ii. 9, 10, 11, "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name above every name,——That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." And these things are spoken of Christ, *as God man;* for in this last mentioned place, it is mentioned as the reward of his being found in fashion as a man, and humbling himself, and in that other place, and in the place in Romans, his being universal Judge, and every knee bowing to him, and every tongue confessing to him, is spoken of him *as God man;* for it is said that he "died, rose, and revived," that he might have this honour and authority. So in John v. at the 27th ver. it is said that the Father hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of God: So that if he has acted the part of *a Judge*, towards the elect angels, it must be since his incarnation: And we know that he is to judge angels at the last day as God man.

Corol. I. Hence Christ is *the tree of life in the heavenly paradise*, to all the inhabitants of it. If our first parents had stood in their obedience, and were found meet for their reward of eternal life; then they were to be brought to the tree of life, and were to receive it from that tree, by eating the fruit of it, as the eternal life was the fruit of that tree. Thus it is in the earthly paradise, the dwelling place of men. And there was also a Tree of life in the heavenly paradise, the dwelling place of angels. When they had stood in their obedience, and were looked upon of God meet for the reward of eternal life, they were brought to Jesus, to receive the reward at his hands, which they in God's account especially become worthy of by their being willing to be subject to him as God man, and being willing to depend on him as their absolute Lord and supreme Judge.

Corol. II. Here we may observe the wonderful *analogy* there is in God's dispensations towards angels and men.

Corol. III. Here we may take notice of the manifold wisdom of God; what glorious and wonderful ends are accomplished by the same events in heaven, earth, and hell, as particularly by those dispensations of Providence in Christ's incarnation, death, and exaltation. How manifold are the wise designs that are carried on in different worlds by the turning of one wheel!

Corol. IV. Here we may observe how the affairs of the Church on earth, and of the blessed Assembly of heaven are *linked together.* When the joyful times of the gospel began on earth, which began with Christ's exaltation, then joyful times began also in heaven among the angels there, and by the same means. When we have such a glorious occasion given us to rejoice, they have an occasion given them. So long as the church continued under a legal dispensation, so long the angels continued *under law;* for since their confirmation, the angels are not under law, as is evident by what I have said in my Notes on Gal. v. 18. So doubtless at the same time there was a great addition to the happiness of the separate spirits of the saints, of which the resurrection of many of them at Christ's resurrection is an argument. And in the general, when God gradually carries on the designs of grace in this world, by accomplishing glorious things in the church below, there is a new occasion of joy and glory to the church in heaven; thus the matter is represented in John's Revelations, and it is fit that it should be thus, seeing they are *one family.*

[744] *Confirmation of the angels by Jesus Christ.* That Christ in his ascension into heaven, gave to the angels the reward of eternal life, or of confirmed immutable happiness, may be argued from Eph. iv. 10. "He that descended, is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might *fill* all things, i. e. all things not only on the face of earth, but all things in the world where he dwelt before he descended into the lower parts of the earth, as in the foregoing verse: all things in the lower parts of the earth whither he descended, and all things in heaven. By "all *things*," agreeably to the apostle's way of using such an expression, is meant all *persons* or *intelligent beings*, as in Philip. ii. 9, 10, "Wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;" as there, so here, the apostle is speaking of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, as appears by comparing this with the foregoing verse; and the apostle there in Philippians mentions these three, as therein enumerating all things whatsoever; for certainly, what-

ever things there are, they must be either in heaven, or in the earth, or under the earth; and doubtless by all things there, that are spoken of as being included in these three, is intended the same with all things spoken of here, as included in the same three divisions of the universe. But it is evident, that by *things* there, is meant *persons*, or *intelligent creatures:* it is certainly they who shall bow the knee to him, and whose tongues shall confess to him. And as there, God is said highly to have exalted Christ, and to have given him a name above every name, i. e. above the highest angels in heaven, as well as above the highest prince upon earth; so here, he is said to have ascended up far *above all heavens*, or *above the highest part of heaven*, and therefore, *above the seat of the highest angel*, that he might fill *all universally*, the highest as well as the lowest, that all might depend on him and receive their fullness from him. By *things in heaven*, in that place in Philippians, and so doubtless here, is meant *the angels;* and by *things in earth*, is meant *elect men living on earth;* and by *things under the earth*, or in the lower parts of the earth, is meant *the souls of departed saints, whose bodies are gone under the earth*, and especially *the saints that were dead and buried before Christ came*, or *before Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth.* Christ died and was buried, that he might fill those that were dead and buried. Rom. xiv. 9. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of *the dead* and of *the living*." That by *things* or *creatures under the earth*, is meant *souls of buried saints*, and not *devils* and *damned souls in hell*, is manifest from Rev. v. 13. "And every creature which is *in heaven*, and *on the earth*, and *under the earth*, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." This would not be said of *devils* and *wicked, damned souls*, who are far from thus praising and extolling God and Christ with such exultation: instead of that, they are continually blaspheming them.

And again; by *all things*, is meant *all elect intelligent creatures:* Eph. i. 10. "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one *all things* in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in him." And if he means all intelligent elect creatures there, by all things in heaven and earth, doubtless he also does, when he speaks of all things in heaven and on the earth, and the lower parts of the earth, in this iv. chap. of the same Epistle, where he is treating of the same thing, viz. the glory of Christ's exaltation. So again, Colos. i. 20, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile *all things* to himself, by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. In these two places last

referred to, are mentioned only things in heaven and things in earth. Those, which in those other places are called *things under the earth*, being here ranked among *things in heaven*, because their souls are in heaven, though their bodies are in the lower parts of the earth.

Christ is said to have descended and ascended, that he might *fill* all things not only in earth and under the earth, but in the highest heavens. Now by his *filling* all things, or all elect creatures, according to the apostle's common use of such an expression, must be understood *filling them with life, and the enjoyment of their proper good—giving them blessedness, and perfecting their blessedness—making them complete in a happy state;* as in the iii. chap. of this Epistle, 19 verse, "And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that ye might be *filled with all the fullness* of God." Colos. ii. 10. "Ye are *complete* in him." Rom. xi. 12. "Now if the fall of them be the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their *fullness!*" So that when we are are put in mind that Christ, who dwelt once on the earth, descended into the lower parts of the earth, and then ascended far above all heavens, that he might *fill* all things, the meaning is, that Christ came down from heaven and dwelt among us on the earth; the word was made flesh and dwelt among us full of grace and truth; that we might *partake of his fullness*, and might be made *happy by him* and *in him*, agreeably to John i. 14. 16. "And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, *full* of grace and truth, and of his *fullness* have all we received, and grace for grace;" and then Christ descended into the lower parts of the earth in a state of death, that he might bless those that were in a state of death; agreeably to Rom. xiv. 9. "For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and of the living." So we read, that when he died, the graves of many saints were opened, and that many bodies of saints that slept arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the Holy City and appeared unto many; and then Christ ascended into heaven, and *filled* them, *bestowing eternal life and blessedness upon them*, that the angels in heaven might all receive the reward of confirmed and eternal glory from him and in him.

That Christ, at his ascension into heaven, thus filled the angels of heaven, is also plainly taught in the last verse of the first chapter of this Epistle, "Which is his body, the fullness of him that *filleth all in all.*" The apostle here has a special respect to his filling the angels, and particularly to their being subjected to him to receive their fullness from him as their head and as their Lord, at his ascension; for he in those foregoing verses is speaking of

Christ's being made the Lord and head of the angels at his ascension, "Which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be head over all things to the church." By *all things*, is here meant, as in the verse we are upon, especially *all intelligent creatures, men and angels*, as in that verse in the iv. chap. that we are upon. God has given him to be head over the angels to the church; agreeably to Heb. i. 14; "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heirs of salvation?" The same all things that Christ is here said *to be made head over*, he is said in the next verse *to fill*. By this it appears, that the angels at Christ's ascension received their *fullness*, i. e. their whole reward, all their confirmed life and eternal blessedness from Christ, as their Judge, because they received it from him as their Lord, or head of government; for they are said to be put under his feet, and also that they received it *in* him as the fountain of communication. He did not only adjudge it to them, but he gives it to them, and they possess it as united to him in a constant dependence on him, and have that more full enjoyment of God than they before had, as beholding God's glory in his face, and as enjoying God in him; for he is here spoken of not only as their Lord, but their Head, as a natural head to a body, as appears by comparing the two last verses together.

This is confirmed again by the 10th verse, "That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth, even in him." The apostle adds, *even in him*, at the end of the verse, because it might seem wonderful that not only things on earth, but even things in heaven, or the angels, should be gathered together in him, who was one that existed in the human nature. By *gathering together in one*, is meant *making happy together in one head*, or *uniting all in one fountain of life and happiness;* as appears by John xvii. 20, 21, 22, 23.

The same thing is taught again in Colos. ii. 9, 10. "For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are *complete* in him, who is the head of all principality and power." What is rendered *complete in him*, in the original properly signifies *filled up*, or *filled full, in him*. He is he in whom all *the fullness* of the Godhead dwells, and in whom the creature receives *that fullness;* and he is the head of communication whence ye receive *fullness*, or in whom ye are *filled full*, who is the same person, who is also the head, in whom the angels receive their fullness, as it is added, "who is the head of all principality and power."

This is very agreeable to what the apostle says, Colos. i. 18, 19, "And he is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the pre-eminence, for it pleased the Father that in him all fullness should dwell." By this it appears that it was the design of God so to exalt and glorify his Son, that all his intelligent creatures should in every thing be after him, inferior to him, subject to him, and dependent on him, and should have all their fullness, all their supplies from him, and in him; especially if we compare this verse with the context, and with many other places in the New Testament.

That the angels have their fullness, or their eternal good and happiness, not only from the hands of Christ, but also in him as the head and fountain of it, and as enjoying God in him, and that they have their confirmation in and by him, is confirmed in Christ's being called angels' food. The Psalmist, speaking of *manna*, says, Ps. lxxviii. 26, "Man did eat angels' food;" which can be understood no otherwise than that that, of which manna was the type, was angels' food; but this Christ tells us is himself, in John vi. 31, 32. There Christ tells us that that bread from heaven spoken of in this very place in the lxxviii. Psalm, is himself; for the Jews quote the beginning of this passage, that is, the verse immediately preceding in the psalm, ver. 31. "Our fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, as it is written, he gave them bread from heaven to eat;" and then we have Christ's answer in the two next verses. "Moses gave you not *that* bread from heaven; (i. e. *that* bread from heaven spoken of in that place that you cite,) but my Father giveth you *the true bread* from heaven; for *the bread of God* is he which cometh down, and giveth life unto the world." Christ is called the tree of life that grows in the midst of the paradise of God, but we know that the use of the tree of life in paradise was that they that ate of that fruit might have confirmed life, and never die, but live for ever. And the same is signified by Christ's being called, in the vi. chap. of John, *the bread of life*, viz. that he that eats of this bread should have confirmed life, and not die, but live for ever, as Christ himself there teaches, ver. 48, &c. "I am the bread of life; your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die; I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any one (for so the original signifies) eat of this bread, he shall live for ever." But we are taught from the forementioned place that it is the angels' bread of life as well as ours, and therefore it is that bread by which they have eternal life, or which they eat of and live for ever, and is a tree of life to them as well as to us, a tree, the fruit whereof they eat and live for ever as well as we.

Corol. I. Here we may take occasion to observe the sweet harmony that there is between God's dispensations, and particularly the analogy and agreement there is between his dealings with the angels and his dealings with mankind; that though one is innocent and the other guilty, the one having eternal life by a covenant of grace, the other by a covenant of works, yet both have eternal life by his Son Jesus Christ God man, and both, though different ways, by the humiliation and sufferings of Christ; the one as the price of life, the other as the greatest and last trial of their steadfast and persevering obedience. Both have eternal life through different ways by their adherence, and voluntary submission, and self-dedication to Christ crucified, and he is made the Lord and King of both, and head of communication, influence, and enjoyment to both, and a head of confirmation to both; for as the angels have confirmed life in and by Christ, so have the saints: all that are united in this head have in him a security of perseverance. Thus Christ is the tree of life that groweth in the paradise of God to all that belong to that paradise, and to all that ever eat of the fruit of that tree. As Adam, if he had persevered through his trial, would have eat of the fruit of the tree of life, and after that would have had confirmation and been secure of perseverance; so are all that taste of the fruit of this tree, this branch that grows out of the stem of Jesse, this tender plant and root out of a dry ground, this branch of the Lord and fruit of the earth, this bush that God dwells in, this low tree which God exalts. Seeing the saints and angels are formed to be one society dwelling together as one company to all eternity, it was fit that they should be thus united in one common head, and that their greatest interests, and those things that concern their everlasting happiness should be so linked together, and that they should have such communion, or common concern in the same great events in which God chiefly manifests himself to them, and by which they come to the possession of the eternal reward.

Corol. II. Here also we may observe that God's work from the beginning of the universe to the end, and in all parts of the universe appears to be but one. It is all one design carried on, one affair managed, in all God's dispensations towards all intelligent beings, viz. the glorifying and communicating himself in and through his Son Jesus Christ as God man, and by the work of redemption of fallen man. Those of the angels that fell are destroyed for their opposition to God in this affair, and are overthrown, and condemned, and destroyed by the Redeemer; those of them that stood, are confirmed for their submission and adherence to God in this great affair. So the work of God is one, if we view it in all its parts; what was done in heaven, and what was done on earth, and in hell, in the beginning, and since that through all ages, and what will be done at the end of the world.

Corol. III. From this we may see that the angels are interested in Jesus Christ God man, as well as elect men, and that the *incarnation* of Christ was not only for our sakes, (though chiefly for ours,) but also for the sake of the angels. For God having from eternity, from his infinite goodness, designed to communicate himself to creatures, the way in which he designed to communicate himself to elect beloved creatures, all of them was to unite himself to a created nature, and to become one of the creatures, and to gather together in one all elect creatures in that creature, whom he assumed into a personal union with himself, and to manifest to them, and maintain intercourse with them through him. All creatures having *this* benefit by Christ's incarnation, that God thereby is, as it were, come down to them from his infinite height above them, and is become a fellow-creature, and all elect creatures hereby have opportunity for a more free and intimate converse with God, and full enjoyment of him than otherwise could be. And though Christ is not the Mediator of the angels in the same sense that he is of men, yet he is *a middle person* between God and them, through whom is all their intercourse with God, and derivations from him.

Corol. IV. That the person who is the head of all elect creatures, in whom all are gathered together in one, by whom they all have their eternal fullness and glory, and who is the common fountain of all their good, and the common medium through whom God communicates himself to all, is so much nearer to men than to the angels, confirms it, that the *saints are higher in glory than the angels.*

Corol. V. This confirms it that the church, or blessed assembly in *heaven*, is in a like *progressive state*, with the church on earth; for, at the same time that the church in this world was advanced to a state of new light and glory by the dawning of the gospel day, the angels in heaven were advanced to a new state of glory and happiness; and not only so, but the souls of the *saints* that died *under the Old Testament* were *advanced* much *higher in glory*, at *Christ's resurrection and ascension*, for the text in Eph. iv. 10, teaches that at that time of the manifestation of Christ God man in this universe, each of those three were advanced to a state of new blessedness, viz. the church on earth, and departed souls of saints whose bodies were in the lower parts of the earth, and also the angels in heaven. He came and dwelt upon earth among us, and we beheld his glory, and received of his fullness. When he rose from the dead he begat the church again to a living hope, as it were, raised the church from the dead with him, and the church here was advanced to so much higher glory that her former glory was no glory in this respect by reason of the glory that excelleth; and then descended into

the lower parts of the earth, and filled those that were there—advanced the souls of departed saints in glory, in becoming Lord of the dead; and in token of it, and one instance of it then, was his granting a resurrection to many of them, whereby the future glory of the resurrection was in a measure anticipated. Doubtless those saints, that rose with Christ, ascended triumphing with him into heaven, into new glory and blessedness. These things confirm that the assembly in heaven has all along been in a like progressive state with the church on earth, and is in a preparatory state; and that things there, from the beginning of the world hitherto have been working towards a great end, and glorious issue, and consummation at the end of the world, as it is here.

The church of angels and saints there at first was in a state of infancy to what it is now, as it was with the church on earth, and have been brought forward to greater fullness and perfection by great events of providence, as it has been with the church here; and things there will arrive at a consummation at the same time, and in the same great event at the end of the world, that they will here. The church in heaven was greatly advanced in happiness at Christ's exaltation, whence commenced the gospel day to the church in this world; and so again the church in heaven will receive another still much higher advancement in glory at the time of the fall of Antichrist, as appears by several passages in the book of Revelations, as abundantly appears, Rev. xviii. 20, and the nine first verses of the xix. chap., and xx. chap. ver 4. And both that part of the church that is on earth, and that which is in heaven, shall at the same time receive their highest advancement in glory, together with the consummation of Christ's exaltation at the day of judgment. See No. 777, Corol. 3.

[942] *Confirmation of the Angels.* Before that the angels were confirmed in holiness judicially, so that they were sure of never falling away, they were first greatly prepared for it by having their hearts greatly confirmed in holiness, naturally in some respect so: i. e. holiness was greatly confirmed by the tendency and influence of the means God used with them to that end. They were first greatly confirmed by what they saw of evil, the knowledge they gained of the evil of sin and its punishment in the fall of the angels, the dreadful ruin that sin brought, and also by what they saw of their own weakness, and mutability, and insufficiency for themselves, and also the distinguishing grace of Christ to them in preserving them when others fell; and afterwards by what they saw in that fall of man, and its consequences, and the grace of God to man, and what they saw in God's dispensations of providence, in behalf of his church, and against his enemies from age to age, and by the many trials they had of their obedience through the age of the Old Testament. But their natural confirmation,

and so their preparation for a judicial confirmation, had its finishing stroke by what they saw and did in the time of Christ's humiliation, and above all at the time of his last sufferings. What came to pass then, did above all other things confirm their hearts in holiness and ripen their preparation for a judicial confirmation, which then was completed, and crowned their preparation. Their hearts were then confirmed by what they saw then of God's glory, which had its chief manifestation then, and what they then saw of the evil and dreadful nature of sin, which had a much greater manifestation in what Christ did and suffered for sin, and sinners, than in the sin and punishment of fallen angels; and in the honour that they saw one so infinitely great and glorious as Jesus Christ, put upon God's authority and law, and the hatred he manifested of sin, and his willingly abasing himself so infinitely to honour God, and promote the happiness of his little unworthy sinful creatures, and by their own steadfast, universal, and perfect obedience to God, and thorough subjection to Christ under such a trial, and in seeing Christ's exaltation, and the success of such humiliation and obedience as Christ performed, and the infinite benefit of thorough obedience to God, in great humiliation, and self-denial in what they saw in Christ.

This confirmation of the hearts of the elect angels that prepared them for a judical confirmation consisted in the following things:

1. In the warning they had, or what they saw, to make them sensible, of the evil nature and dreadful consequences of sin, and so to cause them to fear God.

2. In their humiliation, by what they saw to make them sensible of their own emptiness, and insufficiency for themselves, and dependence on the grace of Christ.

3. In what they saw more of God in the manifestations of his glorious excellency, and goodness, and grace to them, to increase their love to God and Christ.

4. In the example they had set them of obedience by Christ, whose obedience was performed by a person infinitely greater than they, and was performed with such infinite abasement, and an abasement of a like kind with what was required of them, (only infinitely greater) viz. abasement in ministering to so mean and despicable a creature as man; and in the infinite love to God, and regard to his authority that was manifested by that obedience.

5. They had their hearts confirmed in obedience by habit and custom, having long persevered in perfect obedience, and having often overcome under trials which they had. And then besides the natural tendency and influence to confirm their

hearts in holiness that those things had, which came to pass while they were yet in a state of preparation for their judicial confirmation. That judicial confirmation itself had also a great natural tendency to confirm them, as the bestowment of this infinite reward upon them made manifest God's eternal, electing, distinguishing love, and sovereign and infinite grace to them; and as they hereby receive the sweet and infinitely precious fruit of that grace and love, which tendency for ever must strongly engage their hearts to God in love, and to move them with great devotedness now to make an everlasting dedication of themselves to God and Christ.

[935] *Confirmation of the angels at Christ's ascension—Progress of the work of redemption.* The service of the angels of heaven was altered after Christ's ascension from what it had been before, in some analogy to the alteration that was made in the service of the church on earth. The service of the church on earth before Christ's ascension, and that establishment of the evangelical dispensation consequent thereupon, was more legal and mercenary, more from a spirit of bondage, not so free and ingenuous; but afterwards when faith as the great condition was more fully revealed, and God here more clearly revealed the saints' infallible perseverance, the service of the church is more the service of those that are not under the law, but under grace, from a free spirit, a spirit of adoption, which is a spirit of love. So the angels till they were confirmed at Christ's ascension served God more from a spirit of fear, being yet in probation, and their eternal happiness or eternal damnation being yet suspended on their perfect obedience not yet completed, their service was more mercenary, but when Christ ascended, and they were confirmed, thenceforward their service became more disinterested, and merely the service of love; being now no longer in a state of probation, but sure of eternal life by the infallible promise of God.

[947] *Confirmation of the angels.* The service of the angels will not be at an end till the end of the world, when the work of redemption shall be finished; and Christ, whose servants they are, shall have finished his work as Mediator, having fully brought home and glorified all his elect, to whom the angels are ministering spirits, and therefore their most solemn judgment and reward shall be then; but God is pleased to confirm them before the last judgment, and grants them an anticipation of their reward, and deals with them in this respect as he deals with mankind. Man is confirmed when he first believes in Christ, but his work is not done till death, and the reward not bestowed till then; and therefore let the saint be never so fully confirmed and assured before, yet it is proper that judgment should succeed the finishing of his

work. The bestowment of reward for a work done is by an act of judgment.

[994] *Confirmation of the angels.* One trial of the obedience of the angels before Christ's exaltation was, that till then they were in a great measure kept in the dark as to God's drift and aim in those great works of God in which they were employed as his ministers from age to age. The grand design and scheme of infinite wisdom in the successive operations of his hands and dispensations of his providence from one age to another, was not opened to them till Christ's exaltation, as appears by Eph. iii. 9, 10. So the obedience of God's church, which in its minority was tried by prescribing to them a manifold and burdensome ceremonial service, of which they did not know the meaning or design.

[1329] *Confirmation of the angels.* It is an argument that the angels were not confirmed till Christ ascended into heaven, that Jesus Christ God man is risen and ascended, is appointed the head of the new creation, which only is that which cannot be shaken. As to the old creation, it is all that which is liable to pass away. Christ himself, while in the flesh, did in some respects belong to the old creation that passed away, but in his rising again to a glorious immortal life, and so being the first-born from the dead, he is the beginning of the creation of God, the first-born of every creature; the Beginning and Head of the new creation.

HEAVEN.

h *Death of a Saint.*—When a saint dies, he has no cause at all to grieve because he leaves his friends and relations whom he dearly loves; for he doth not properly leave them, he enjoys them still in Christ, because every thing that they love in them, and love them for, is in Christ in an infinite degree, whether it be nearness of relation, or any perfection and good received, or love in us, or a likeness in dispositions, or whatever is a rational ground of love.

ff *Union with Christ.* By virtue of the believer's union with Christ, he doth really possess all things. That we know plainly from scripture; but it may be asked, How he possesses all things; what is he the better for it; how is a true Christian so much richer than other men? To answer this, I will tell you what I mean by possessing all things. I mean that God, three in one, all that he is, and all that he has, and all that he does, all that he has made or done, the whole universe, bodies and spirits, light, heaven, angels, men, and devils, sun, moon, stars, land, and sea, fish, and

fowls, all the silver and gold, all beings and perfections, as well as mere man, are as much the Christian's as the money in his pocket, the clothes he wears, or the house he dwells in, or the victuals he eats; yea, more properly his, more advantageously, more his than if he commanded all these things mentioned to be just in all respects as he pleased, at any time, by virtue of the union with Christ; because Christ, who certainly doth here possess all things, is entirely his, so that he possesses it all, more than a wife the property of the best and dearest of husbands, more than the hand possesses what the head doth. All the universe is his, only he has not the trouble of managing it; but Christ, to whom it is no trouble to manage it, manages it for him a thousand times as much to his advantage as he could himself, if he had the managing of all the atoms in the universe. Every thing is managed by Christ so as to be most to the advantage of the Christian. Every particle of air, or every ray of the sun, so that he in the other world, when he comes to see it, shall sit and enjoy all this vast inheritance with surprising, amazing joy. And how is it possible for a man to possess any thing more than so as shall be most to his advantage? And then besides this, the Christian shall have every thing managed just according to his will; for his will shall so be left in the will of God, that he had rather have it according to God's will than any way in the world. And who would desire to possess all things more than to have all things managed just according to his will? And then besides, he himself shall so use them as to be most to his own advantage in his thoughts, and meditations, &c. Now, how is it possible for any one to possess any thing more than to have it managed as much as possible according to his will, as much as possible for his own advantage, and for himself to use it as much as possible according to his advantage? But it is certain that so far shall the true Christian possess all things: it is not a probable scheme, but absolutely certain; for we know that all things will be managed so as shall be most agreeable to his will: that cannot be denied, nor that it shall be most to his advantage, and that he himself shall use it most to his own advantage. This is the kingdom Christ so often promised: they shall be kings with a witness at this rate: this is the sitting in Christ's throne, and inheriting all things promised to the victors in the Revelation, and the like in many other places.

ii. *Saints.* Is it not a very improper thing that saints in some respects should be advanced above angels, seeing angels are of more excellent natural parts? I answer, No more improper than it is for the queen in some respects to be advanced above the nobles and barons of far nobler natural powers.

5. *Heaven.* There is no more reason why it should be a damp to the happiness of some in heaven that others are happier, than

that their happiness should be damped by a bare possibility of greater happiness, supposing them to be all equal; for if they were all equal, and all full of happiness, yet every one would know that greater happiness is possible, absolutely, and possible for them if God had but enlarged their capacity. And why should not they who are actuated by pure reason desire it, as much as if it were actually enjoyed by some beings? for barely that it is enjoyed by other beings cannot possibly cause those that are actuated by pure reason, and whose desires in every respect are agreeable to reason to desire it, any more than if it was only possible to be enjoyed, and were never actually enjoyed by any. But instead of the superiority of some above others in happiness, being a damp on the happiness of those that are inferior, there is undoubted reason why it should be an addition to their happiness, and why it would rather be a detraction from their happiness if it were otherwise; for most certainly there is a pure, ardent, and inconceivably vehement, mutual love between the glorified saints, and this love is in proportion to the perfection and amiableness of the object loved. Therefore, seeing their love to them is proportional to their amiableness, it must necessarily cause delight when they see their happiness proportional to their amiableness, and so to their love to them; it will not damp any to see them loved more than themselves, for they shall have as much love as they desire, and as great manifestations of love as they can bear, and they themselves will love those that are superior in holiness as much as others, and will delight to see others love them as much as themselves. We are very apt to conceive that those that are more holy and more happy than others in heaven will be elated and lifted up above them; whereas their being superior in holiness implies their being superior in humility, or having the greatest humility; for humility is a part of holiness that is capable of degrees in the perfect state of heaven as well as other graces; not that the holiest shall think more meanly of themselves than the least holy, for they shall all be perfectly humble, and perfectly free from pride, and none shall think more highly of themselves than they ought to think, but yet as they see further into the divine perfections than others, so they shall penetrate further into the vast and infinite distance there is between them and God, and their delight of annihilating themselves that God may be all, shall be greater. And besides those that are highest in holiness, and so necessarily highest in happiness, (for holiness and happiness are all one in heaven,) instead of any thing like despising those that are less holy and happy, will love those that are inferior to them more than they would do if they had not so much holiness and happiness more than if they were but equal with them, and more than those do that are equal with them. This is certain;

for the foundation of the saints' love to each other will be their love to the image of God which they see in them. Now most certainly, the holier a man is, the more he loves *the same degree* of the image; so that the holiest in heaven will love that image of God they see in the least holy more than those do that are less holy; and that which makes it beyond any doubt that this superior happiness will be no damp to them, is this, that their superior happiness consists in their great humility, and in their greater love to them, and to God, and Christ, whom the saints look upon as themselves. These things may be said of this, beside what may be said about every one being completely satisfied and full of happiness, having as much as he is capable of enjoying or desiring; and also what may be said about their entire resignation; for God's will is become so much their own, that the fulfilling of his will, let it be what it may, fills them with inconceivable satisfaction.

[105] *Heaven.* That the glorified spirits shall grow in holiness and happiness in eternity, I argue from this foundation, that their number of ideas shall increase to eternity. How great soever the number of their ideas when they are first glorified, it is but limited; and it is evident the time will come when they shall have lived in glory so long that the parts of duration, each equal to a million million ages, that they have lived, will be more in number than their ideas were at first. Now we cannot suppose that they will ever entirely forget every thing that has passed in heaven, and in the universe for a whole million million of ages. It is undoubted that they never will have forgot what passed in their life upon earth, the sins they have been saved from, their regeneration, the circumstances which did heighten their mercies, their good works which follow them, their death, &c. They will without doubt retain innumerable multitudes of ideas of what passed in the first seventy years; so also they shall retain to eternity their ideas of what was done in the ages of the world, with relation to the church of God, and God's wondrous providence with respect to the world of men; and can we then think that a whole million million ages of those great and most glorious things that pass in heaven shall ever be erased out of their minds? But if they retain but one idea for one such vast period, their ideas shall be millions of times more in number than when they first entered into heaven, as is evident, because by supposition the number of such ages will be millions of times more in number; therefore, their knowledge will increase to eternity; and if their knowledge, their holiness; for as they increase in the knowledge of God, and of the works of God, the more they will see of his excellency, and the more they see of his excellency, *cæteris paribus*, the more will they love him, and the more they love God, the more delight

and happiness will they have in him. See Note on Ps. lxxxix. 1, 2. It will be objected that at this rate we might prove that the damned increase in perfection. I answer, No; for, though it is true that they shall increase in knowledge, they will increase in odiousness in the same proportion.

[112] *Heaven.* Addition to 2d Corol. of 108. What beauteous and fragrant flowers will these be, reflecting all the sweetness of the Son of God! how will Christ delight to walk in the garden among those beds of spices, to feed in the garden, and to gather lilies!

[152] *Heaven.* The saints in heaven will doubtless eternally exercise themselves in contemplation. They will not want employ this way; not in exercising their thoughts and study upon intricacies and seeming repugnance to unfold them and discover another further and further that way, as it is here, but by viewing in their minds one thing after another, as they will naturally be led, and sweetly drawn by love and delight, and with such intenseness as the natural bent of their hearts will cause. Their sight shall reach further and further, and new things shall plainly present to their minds, without the mixture of any error. It is *error* always from whence intricacy proceeds, and seeming repugnance, and not from *ignorance.* The object of their thoughts shall be the glory of God, which they shall contemplate in the creation in general, in the wonderful make of it; particularly of the highest heavens, and in the wonders of God's providence. It shall most clearly and delightfully be manifested in the church of saints and angels, which they shall discover more and more by their conversation, assisting one another to discoveries in other things, and most of all mediate ways in the man Christ Jesus. They shall employ themselves in singing God's praise, or expressing their thoughts to God and Christ, and also to one another, and in going from one part of heaven and of the universe to another, to behold the glories of God shining in the various parts of it.

[143] *Heaven.* In the future world the saints' love, one to another, will be such, that it will be a very delightful consideration to them, that Christ Jesus dearly loves the other saints, and it will fill them with joy to see him manifesting his love to them. They again shall see the other saints rejoicing that Christ loves and delights in them.

Singing is amiable, because of the proportion that is perceived in it: singing in divine worship is beautiful and useful, because it expresses and promotes the harmonious exercise of the mind. There will doubtless in the future world be that which, as it will be an expression of an immensely greater and more excellent harmony of the mind, so will be a far more lively expression of this harmony, and shall itself be vastly more harmonious, yea,

than our air, or ear, by any modulation is capable of, which expressions, and the harmony thereof, shall be sensible, and shall in a far more lively manner strike our perception than sound.

[182] *Heaven.* How ravishing are the proportions of the reflexions of rays of light, and the proportion of the vibrations of the air! and without doubt God can contrive matter so that there shall be other sort of proportions that may be quite of a different kind, and may raise another sort of pleasure in the sense, and in a manner to us now inconceivable, that shall be vastly more ravishing and exquisite. And in all probability the abode of the saints after the resurrection will be so contrived by God that there shall be external beauties and harmonies altogether of another kind from what we perceive here, and probably those beauties will appear chiefly in the bodies the man Christ Jesus, and of the saints. Our animal spirits will also be capable of immensely more fine and exquisite proportions in their motions, than now they are, being so gross; but how much more ravishing will the exquisite spiritual proportions be that shall be seen in minds, in their acts between one spiritual act and another, between one disposition and another, and between one mind and another, and between all their minds and Christ Jesus, and particularly between the man Christ Jesus and the Deity, and among the persons of the Trinity, the supreme harmony of all! And it is out of doubt with me that there will be immediate intellectual views of minds, one of another, and of the Supreme mind, more immediate, clear, and sensible than our views of bodily things with bodily eyes. In this world we behold spiritual beauties only mediately by the intervention of our senses, in perceiving those external actions which are the effects of spiritual proportion. Hereby the ravishingness of the beauty is much obscured, and our sense of it flattened and deadened; but when we behold the beauties of mind more immediately than now we do the colours of the rainbow, how ravishing will it be! All that there wants in order to such an intellectual view, is that a clear and sensible apprehension of what is in mind should be raised in our own mind constantly according to such and such laws; for it is no other way that we perceive with our bodily eyes, or perceive by any of our senses.

Then also our capacities will be exceedingly enlarged, and we shall be able to apprehend, and to take in more extended and compounded proportions. We see that the narrower the capacity the more simple must the beauty be to please: thus, in proportion of sounds, the birds and brute creatures are most delighted with simple music, and in the proportion confined to a few notes; so little children are not able to perceive the sweetness of very complex tunes where respect is to be had to the proportion of a great many notes together, in order to perceive the sweetness of

the tune; then perhaps we shall be able fully and easily to apprehend the beauty, or where respect is to be had to thousands of different ratios at once to make up the harmony. Such kind of beauties, when fully perceived, are far the sweetest.

[188] *Heaven.* The best, most beautiful, and most perfect way that we have of expressing a sweet concord of mind to each other is by music. When I would form in my mind ideas of a society in the highest degree happy, I think of them as expressing their love, their joy, and the inward concord, and harmony, and spiritual beauty of their souls, *by sweetly singing to each other.* But if in heaven minds will have an *immediate* view of one another's dispositions without any such intermediate expression, how much sweeter will it be! But to me it is probable that the glorified saints, after they have again received their bodies, will have ways of expressing the concord of their minds by some other emanations than sounds, of which we cannot conceive, that will be vastly more proportionate, harmonious, and delightful than the nature of sounds is capable of; and the music they will make will be in a measure capable of modulations in an infinitely more nice, exact, and fine proportion than our gross airs, and with organs as much more adapted to such proportions.

[95] *Happiness of heaven.* When the body enjoys the perfections of health and strength, the motions of the animal spirits are not only brisk and free, but also harmonious; there is a regular proportion in the motion from all parts of the body that begets delight in the soul, and makes the body feel pleasantly all over—God has so excellently contrived the nerves and parts of the human body. But few men since the fall, especially since the flood, have health to so great a perfection as to have much of this harmonious motion. When it is enjoyed, one whose nature is not very much vitiated and depraved, is very much assisted thereby in every exercise of body or mind; and it fits one for the contemplation of more exalted and spiritual excellencies and harmonies, as music does. But we need not doubt but this harmony will be in its proportion in the bodies of the saints after the resurrection, and that as every part of the bodies of the wicked shall be excruciated with intolerable pain, so every part of the saints' refined bodies shall be as full of pleasure as they can hold, and that this will not take the mind off from, but prompt and help it in, spiritual delight, to which even the delight of their spiritual bodies shall be but a shadow.

[198] *Happiness.* How soon do earthly lovers come to an end of their discoveries of each other's beauty! how soon do they see all that is to be seen! Are they united as near as possible, and have communion as intimate as possible? How soon do they come to the most endearing expressions of love that it is possible

to give, so that no new ways can be invented, given, or received. And how happy is that love in which there is an eternal progress in all those things wherein new beauties are continually discovered, and more and more loveliness, and in which we shall for ever increase in beauty ourselves; where we shall be more capable of finding out and giving, and shall receive more and more endearing expressions of love for ever; our union will become more close, and communion more intimate!

[206] *Heaven.* In heaven it is the direct reverse of what it is on earth, for there by length of time things become more and more youthful, that is, more vigorous, active, tender, and beautiful.

[263] *Heaven.* If the saints after the resurrection shall see by light, and speak and hear by sounds, it is probable that the medium will be infinitely finer, and more adapted to a distant and exact representation, so that a small vibration in sound, though the undulations may proportionally decrease according to the distance from their rise or fountain, yet may be conveyed infinitely farther with exactness before they begin to be confused and lost through the sluggishness of the medium, or through the bulk, the roughness, or tenaciousness of the particles, and the conveyance may likewise be with far greater swiftness. The organs also will be immensely more exquisitely perceptive, so that perhaps a vibration a thousand times less than can now be perceived by the ear, may be distinctly and easily perceived by them; and yet the organs may be far more able to bear a very strong vibration than ours in this state; and through niceness of the organ they shall be able to distinguish in the greatest multitude of sounds according to their distance and direction, more exactly by the ear than we do visible objects by the eye; and we know not how far they may clearly hear one another's discourses. So the eye may be so much more sensible, and the medium of vision (the rays) so much more exquisite, that for aught we know they may distinctly see the beauty of one another's countenances and smiles, and hold a delightful and most intimate conversation at a thousand miles distance.

The light of the heavenly regions shall be the brightness of glorified bodies, and especially in the countenance, but chiefly that of the man Christ Jesus, and the glory of God, if there shall be any visible appearance representing the presence of the Deity. The light of the face of Christ will, for the abovementioned cause, be an infinitely more excellent and delightful sort of refulgence than the light of this world. The brightness of *the saints* shall far excel that; but the splendour of *the Sun of Righteousness* shall be immensely more sweet and glorious, except that the light of the bodies of the saints shall be some way or other a communication of the light of Christ, and then the difference will be ra-

ther in *degree* than in *kind* of brightness, as the light which is reflected from a lily is the same light, but less bright than that of the sun. This world is pleasant to us because the light is sweet, and the sensation is pleasant to the mind; how delightful a place then is heaven with its light, so much more fine, more harmonious, more bright, but yet easy and pleasant to behold! Vide Note on Rev. xxi. 11. Vide Nos. 721, 95, 182.

[264] *Spirits separate.* Though we do not certainly know that separate spirits can properly be said to be *in* any place; seeing that a spirit cannot be said to be *in place* at all, only with respect to the immediate mutual operation there is between that and body; now we know not whether there be any such mutual operation with regard to separate spirits, whether or no there be any immediate excitation of any corporeal ideas, or any other way than as they see them in minds that are united to bodies, or remember them as formerly excited in themselves; I say, though we do not certainly know this, yet it does not seem probable that their manner of existence and receiving ideas shall be so exceedingly different from what it is here, and from the church on earth, with whom they are of the same family, and so exceedingly aliene from what it will be after the resurrection, so exceedingly different from the existence of the man Christ Jesus, their head, so exceedingly aliene from Enoch and Elijah, some of their number, and who are now of the same glorified society. Doubtless they are not more so than the angels who never were united to bodies; but it seems to me very improbable that there should be no corporeal world with respect to the angels who have so much to do with the church on earth, and who shall be conversant with the saints after the resurrection, and with whom they shall be conversant: I therefore cannot think that as soon as a spirit leaves a body, the corporeal world is annihilated with regard to it, but that corporeal ideas are excited in them by some law. Why is Christ's body made glorious now in heaven, if there are none in heaven to behold his glory, or if separate spirits do not perceive the beauty of bodies?

[272] *Happiness of heaven.* It is not only for want of sufficient accurateness, strength, and comprehension of mind that from the motion of any one particular atom we cannot tell whether that ever has been that now is, in the whole extent of the creation, as to quantity of matter, figure, bulk, motion, distance, and every thing that ever shall be.

[371] *Resurrection.* The addition of happiness and glory made to the saints at the resurrection, it seems to me evident by the current of the Bible when it tells of those things, will be exceeding great. It is the Marriage of the Lamb and the Church; the state of things then is the state of perfection; all the state of

the church before, both in earth and in heaven, is a growing state. Indeed, the spirits of just men made perfect will be perfectly free from sin and sorrow: will have inexpressible, inconceivable happiness and perfect contentment. But yet part of their happiness will consist in hope of what is to come. They will have as much happiness as they will desire in their existing state, because they will choose to have the addition at that time, and in that order, which God has designed; it will be every way most pleasing, and and satisfying, and contenting to them that it should be so. Their having of perfect happiness does not exclude all increase, nor does it exclude all hope, for we do not know but they will increase in happiness for ever. The souls of the saints may now have as much happiness as they, while separate, desire; and such happiness as so answers their nature in its present state, as to exclude all sort of uneasiness and disquietude; and yet part of that happiness, part of that sweet rest and contenting joy, consists in the sight of what is future. They do not desire that that addition should be now, they know that it will be most beautiful, most for God's glory, most for their own happiness, and most for the glory of the church, and every way most desirable, that it should be in God's order.

But the more properly perfect and consummate state of God's people of the church will be after the resurrection; and the whole is now only growing and preparing for that state: all things that are now done in the world, are but preparations for it.

The accession of happiness will consist partly in these things:

1. Then the saints will be in their natural state of union with bodies, glorious bodies, bodies perfectly fitted for the uses of a holy glorified soul.

2. Then the body of Christ will be perfect, the church will be complete; all the parts of it in being; no part of it under sin or affliction; all the parts of it in a perfect state; all the parts of it together no longer mixed with ungodly men: then the church will be as a bride adorned for her husband, therefore the church will exceedingly rejoice.

3. Then the Mediator will have fully accomplished his work; will have destroyed, and will triumph over all his enemies. Then Christ will fully have obtained his reward; then shall he have perfected the full design that was upon his heart from all eternity, and then Jesus Christ will rejoice, and his members must needs rejoice with him.

4. Then God will have obtained the end of all his great works that he had been doing from the beginning; then all the deep designs of God will be unfolded in their events; then the wisdom of his marvellous contrivances in his hidden, intricate, and nexplicable works will appear, the ends being obtained; then

God's glory will more abundantly appear in his works, his works being perfect; this will cause a great accession of happiness to the saints who behold it; then God will fully have glorified himself, and glorified his Son, and his elect; then he will see that all is very good, and will rejoice in his own works, which will be the joy of all heaven. God will rest and be refreshed; and thenceforward will the inhabitants keep an eternal sabbath, such an one as all foregoing sabbaths were but shadows of.

5. Then God will make more abundant manifestations of his glory, and of the glory of his Son, and will pour forth more plentifully of his Spirit, and will make answerable additions to the glory of the saints, such as will be becoming the commencement of the ultimate and most perfect state of things, and as will become such a joyful occasion as the finishing of all things and the marriage of the Lamb. Then also the glory of the angels will receive proportional additions; for the evil angels are then to have the consummation of their reward. So that the good angels will have the consummation of their reward. This will be the day of Christ's triumph, and the day will last for ever. This will be the wedding-day between Christ and the Church, and this wedding-day will last for ever; the feast, and pomp, and entertainments, and holy mirth, and joys of the wedding will be continued to all eternity.

[372] *Heaven.* It seems to be quite a wrong notion of the happiness of heaven that it is in that manner unchangeable, that it admits not of new joys upon new occasions. The scriptures tell us that there is joy in heaven, and among the angels of God, upon the conversion of one sinner; and why not among the saints? And if there be new joy upon such an occasion, how great joy have they upon the conversion of nations, and the spiritual prosperity of the whole church on earth! It seems to me evident that the church in heaven have received new joys from time to time upon new occasions, ever since the first saint went to heaven; their joy is continually increased as they see the purposes of God's grace unfolded in his wondrous providences towards his church. Their happiness is increased as their number increases; as it will be greatly for the happiness of the body of Christ to be completed as it will be at the resurrection, so it is increasing as the body grows towards perfection. The coming of Christ Jesus, I believe, made an exceedingly great addition to the happiness of the saints of the Old Testament, who were in heaven; and especially was the day of his ascension a joyful day among them. Then Abraham and David, and holy men that lived under the Old Testament, "*received the promise*," which was matter of such joyful expectation to them when on earth. When Christ arose, many bodies

of saints of the Old Testament that slept arose and went to heaven with Christ; for it is unreasonable to suppose they only arose for a few days to die again. The saints must needs have new discoveries of God's glory upon this occasion, as the angels had, Eph. iii. 10. Luke ii. 14. 1 Peter i. 12. It is evident by those scriptures that the angels saw much more of the glory of God by these things; and if they did, undoubtedly the saints also. It was a great addition to the glory of heaven to have Jesus Christ God man made their Head: they had then far more near admittance unto God, and more familiar communication with him, and many other ways did this increase their happiness, and their happiness has been exceedingly greater ever since. Thus the Old Testament prophecies of the glories and blessedness that should attend the coming of the Messiah, I believe, not only aimed at the glory that should be brought to the church *on earth*, by it, but to that part of the church that was *in heaven*. Thus, the church of Israel, those same saints to whom those promises were given, do *receive them* in heaven.

I believe, also, that it greatly contributes to the happiness of the saints in heaven to see the success of the gospel after Christ's ascension, and its conquering the Roman empire, and that they greatly rejoice at the Reformation from popery; and will exceedingly rejoice at the fall of Antichrist and the conversion of the world to Christianity. Those things seem clear to me by many passages in the Revelation, and that their joy is increasing, and will be increasing, as God gradually in his providence unveils his glory, till the last day.

[413] *Heaven—Separate spirits.* One reason why the apostle so much insisted upon the Resurrection of the dead, rather than the blessedness of a separate state, as an encouragement to Christians, was because they in those days looked upon Christ's coming, and so the Resurrection, as just at hand.

[421] *Heaven.* It seems to me probable that that part of the church that is in heaven have been from the beginning of the world progressive in their light, and in their happiness as the church on earth has, and that much of their happiness has consisted in seeing the progressive wonderful doings of God, with respect to his church here in this world. Thus Moses with great joy saw the promises of God fulfilled, in bringing the children of Israel into Canaan, with far greater satisfaction than he would have seen it on earth; because he could much better see the glorious ends God proposed by it, and his wonderful wisdom in that work. So those saints, who die now, before the accomplishment of the far more glorious things to the church that God has foretold which are not yet fulfilled, and for which they have prayed and waited, will see the fulfilment of them with

greater satisfaction than if they lived upon the earth till they were accomplished. The church in heaven, and the church on earth are more *one* people, *one* city, and *one* family, than is generally imagined.

[430] *Heaven.* As there will be various members of different degrees in the body of Christ in heaven, so it seems to me probable that there will be members of various kinds and different offices as it is in the church on earth. 1 Cor. x. That is, there will be some especially distinguished for one grace, others for another; some of one manner of the exercise of grace, others of another; some fitted for this work, others for that: every one will have their distinguishing gift, one after this manner, and another after that, the perfection of the saints in glory nothing hindering; for that perfection will not be of such a kind that one saint may not be more eminent than another in grace, or that they shall not be capable of increasing, and so attaining to higher degrees, nor that one grace in the same saint shall not have a more remarkable and eminent exercise than others; and it is most probable, if it be so, that they shall excel most in the same grace, and the same kind of works by which they were most distinguished on earth: God rewarding their graces and works by giving of them grace more abundantly of the same kind; as Christ hath promised that, "to him that hath shall be given." This difference will be for the beauty and the profit of the whole: they will profit one another by their distinguishing graces; with respect to those graces they will not be beyond being profited by one another, as well as delighted, they will still be employed, and improving themselves.

[431] *Heaven—Degrees of glory.* The exaltation of some in glory above others, will be so far from diminishing any thing of the perfect happiness and joy of the rest that are inferior, that they will be the happier for it. Such will be the union of all of them, that they will be partakers of each other's glory and happiness. 1 Cor. xii. 26. "If one of the members are honoured, all the members rejoice with it."

[432] *Heaven.* Though the saints in heaven will see their exceeding folly and vileness in much of their behaviour here in this world, will see a thousand times as much of the evil and folly of sin as they do now; yet they will not experience any proper sorrow or grief for it, for this reason, because they will perfectly see at the same time how that it is turned to the best to the glory of God, or at least will so perfectly know that it is so; and particularly they will have so much the more admiring and joyful sense of God's grace in pardoning them, that the remembrance of their sins will rather be an indirect occasion of joy. Sorrow and grief for sin is a duty, because we are not capable of having so perfect views of those things. But that a

right sense of the odiousness and folly of sin will under all circumstances, necessarily cause grief, is not so clear. A sense of the great evil of sin is good, absolutely considered; but grief for sin is so only in a certain pre-supposed state and circumstances.

[435] *Heaven.* The church now in heaven is not in its fixed and ultimate, but in a progressive, subordinate, and preparatory state. The state which they are in is in order to another. In the employments in which they are now exercised, they look to that which is still future, to their consummate state, which they have not yet arrived at. Their present happiness is, in many respects, subordinate to a future; and God in his dealings with them has a constant and perpetual respect to the great consummation of all things. So it is both with respect to the saints and angels: all things in heaven and earth, and throughout the universe, are in a state of preparation for the state of consummation; all the wheels are going, none of them stop, and all are moving in a direction to the last and most perfect state. As the church on earth is in a state of preparation for the resurrection state, so is that part of the church which is in heaven. It is God's manner to keep things always progressive, in a preparatory state, as long as there is another change to a more perfect state yet behind. The saints in this world are progressive, and all things relating to them are subordinate and preparatory to the more perfect state of heaven; which is a perfect state, in that it is a state of freedom from sinful and uneasy imperfections; but, when the saints are got to heaven, there is yet another great change yet behind, there is yet another state, which is that fixed and ultimate, and most perfect state for which the whole general assembly both in heaven and earth are designed, and therefore they are still progressive. Not but that I believe the saints will be progressive in knowledge and happiness to all eternity. But when I say the church is progressive before the resurrection, I mean that they are progressive with a progression of preparation for another and more perfect state, their state is itinerary, viatory; their state, their employments, their glory and happiness, are subordinate and preparatory to a future more glorious state.

So, the state of the devils and damned spirits is thus, only in order to a future state of more perfect misery. A criminal in a prison, or in a dungeon, suffers misery, but it is only a subordinate misery, being in order to his approaching execution: So they are spirits in prison, they are bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day. Much of the misery of the devils and damned souls consists in *fear;* the devil is dreadfully afraid of his approaching punishment, as appears by his

so crying out when he was afraid that Christ was going to execute it upon him; he beseeches him not to torment him, and says, "Art thou come to torment me before the time?" So much of the happiness of the saints and angels in heaven consists in *hope*. The church in heaven, as to the happiness it now has in Christ, compared with its ultimate happiness, is, as it were, in a betrothed state. The introducing of the glorious state that succeeds the resurrection, is like the marriage of the Lamb. The glorification of the separate soul, is a marriage, compared with its state in this world. The coming of Christ into the world, and introducing of the gospel state of the church, is a marriage with respect to the state of the church under the Old Testament; and the appearing of Christ incarnate in heaven upon his ascension, together with the great access of glory to the church, was like a marriage with respect to the state of the glorified church before; and the glorious times of the church on earth after the destruction of Antichrist, will be like the marriage of the Lamb. But these are but lower steps; and, in comparison of the final consummation, are but as betrothings, in order to that everlasting marriage of the church with the Lamb, which shall be in the end of the world.

Much of the happiness of the saints, now, consists in beholding and contemplating the wonderful works of God, that are in order to the Consummation, the works of God in his church, both in this world and in heaven.

[477] *Happiness of heaven*, vide Notes on John iv. 14.

[499] *Hades—Separate spirits—Heaven—Hell.* Our first parents enjoyed great happiness: they dwelt in a paradise, and there had a confluence of spiritual and outward blessings and delights before they had so much as performed the condition of eternal happiness, or had had a trial for it. It need not therefore be wondered at, that the separate spirits of saints should be in a very happy state before they are judged at the last judgment, and that the wicked should be very miserable.

[529] *Heaven.* There can be no doubt but that the saints in heaven shall see the flourishing and prosperity of the church on earth; for how can they avoid it, when they shall be *with the King himself*, whose kingdom this church is, and who as King manages all those affairs? Shall the *royal family* be kept in ignorance of the success of the affairs of the kingdom? They shall also be *with the angels*, those ministers by whom the King manages those affairs. In the flourishing of Christ's kingdom here on earth consists much of Christ's mediatorial glory, and of the reward that the Father promised him for his performing what he did on earth in the work of redemption; the happiness of the saints in heaven consists much in that, that they are with

Christ, and are partakers with him in that glory and reward. The saints are not only *with* the King that reigns over this kingdom, but they *reign* with him in the same kingdom, they sit with him in his throne; and therefore it is said that they shall *reign on earth;* that is, when the time of the flourishing and prosperity of Christ's kingdom comes on earth, when he shall reign here in such a glorious manner in his kingdom of grace, they shall reign with him; so they are said to reign with him a thousand years. Therefore doubtless they are not ignorant of the flourishing of the church here on earth.

Can it be supposed that the saints in heaven had not notice of Christ's Incarnation, and did not know what he did here upon earth; and that they had no notice when he was crucified and buried, and rose again; and if not, why should they be ignorant of what succeeded, or of the pouring out of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost; and how the kingdom, of which Christ had thus laid the foundation, flourished? Why should their knowledge of the affairs of Christ's kingdom on earth cease, as soon as Christ was ascended?

The saints in heaven are under infinitely greater advantages to take the pleasure of beholding how Christ's kingdom flourishes than if they were here upon earth; for they can better see, and understand the marvellous steps that divine wisdom takes in all that is done, and the glorious ends he accomplishes, and what opposition Satan makes, and how he is baffled and overthrown. They can see the wise connection of one event with another, and the beautiful order of all things that come to pass in the church in different ages, that to us appear like confusion. They will behold the glory of the divine attributes in his works of providence infinitely more clearly than we can.

The greatest objection that I think of against this, is, the prayer of Simeon; who had it revealed to him, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Messiah; and when he saw him, said, "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation:" as though he should have missed of the pleasure and satisfaction of seeing this salvation, if he had died before. But shall we conclude from hence that if Simeon had died before, he would not have known of Christ's birth? He surely at least would have seen this salvation then, when Christ ascended into heaven. But the case was this: Simeon was now more willing to die, more willing to venture his soul into another world, and could die in much stronger hope, because his faith in God's salvation was abundantly strengthened by this sight. He had the greater assurance, that when he did depart, he should depart in peace; for his eyes had actually seen the salvation which God had pro-

vided for souls, and was therefore more fully persuaded that his soul should be safe and happy in a future state: or if otherwise, it was because the state of separate souls in that particular was not known to him.

Indeed it is desirable to live to see the flourishing of God's church upon this account; that those saints, who live to see it will probably be partakers in that spiritual prosperity; their souls will receive a portion of the spirit that is then plentifully poured out, and so will be increased in grace and holiness; their own souls will prosper, and will be partakers of the prosperity of the church; and besides, they will have a more glorious opportunity to do good, in having a hand in promoting that public prosperity.

An objection may be raised from Eccles. ix. 6. The dead "have no more a portion for ever in any thing done under the sun;" but see an answer in my notes on the verse.

[546] *Separate State—Hell Torments—Heaven.* It may possibly seem strange that the torments of the wicked should be so great, while they are only in prison, in order to their judgment and punishment. But there is no difference in God's dealing with sinners in this respect, from the treatment of malefactors by human judges and rulers; but what naturally arises from the difference of the nature and qualifications of the judges, and the difference of the ends of judgment. Men commit supposed malefactors to prison, in order to a determination whether they are guilty or no, the matter not being yet sufficiently determined; but God, who imprisons wicked men, certainly and infallibly understands whether they are guilty or not: they are not imprisoned, that it may be determined whether they are guilty, but because it is determined and known that they are. The end of human judgment, is to find out, whether a man be guilty or no; but the end of divine judgment is only to declare their guilt, and God's righteousness in their punishment. The guilt of wicked men is infallibly determined when they die: it is fit therefore that they should be bound in chains of darkness and misery; it is fit that God's enemies, and rebels against him, and the objects of his eternal wrath, should be imprisoned in dark and dismal recesses while they are reserved for execution; it is fit that the prison of the objects of divine wrath should be a doleful horrid abode. So it is fit that those who are his elect, whom he hath chosen to make the objects of his love, should be reserved in a paradise in order to that consummation. It is fit that the church, which is the bride, the Lamb's wife, should be reserved in a blissful abode previous to the time of marriage. It is fit that in the mean time it should have blessed communion and conver-

sation with God. The glorification of the souls of the saints at their death, is a marriage in comparison of their conversion, and their state of grace; but it is a state of betrothment, compared with the glory that shall be after the resurrection. So the state of the damned separate spirits, though it be inexpressibly doleful, is yet but as a confinement in chains, and a dark dungeon in order to execution, in comparison of their misery after the day of judgment. See Note on Matth. xviii. 34.

[555] *Heaven—Separate State—Angels.* The saints are spectators of God's providences relating to his church here below. (Vide Hebrews vi. 15. Notes.) One end of the creation of the angels, and giving them such great understanding, was, that they might be fit witnesses and spectators of God's works here below, and might behold all parts of the divine scheme, and see how it was accomplished in the divine works, and revelations from age to age. Mortal men see but a very little, they have a very imperfect view of God's providence in the world while they live, and they do not live long enough to see more than a very small part of the scheme. God saw fit that there should be creatures of very great discerning, and comprehensive understanding, that should be spectators of the whole series of the works of God; and therefore they were created in the beginning of the creation, that they might behold the whole series from the beginning to the consummation of all things. And therefore we read that they sang together, and shouted for joy when they beheld God forming this lower world. Job. xxxviii. 7. So we are taught that they are spectators of the work of redemption, and the progress of it. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Ephes. iii. 10. And as God has made them to be spectators of the great works of divine wisdom and power, so that their minds may be the more engaged and entertained, God allows them to have a subordinate hand in them, and he improves them as his messengers and servants in bringing them to pass.

Hence I argue, that undoubtedly the souls of departed saints are also spectators of the same things; for they go to be in heaven with the angels. The angels carry them to paradise; and we cannot suppose that they leave them there, and that the only opportunity they have to converse with angels from their death till the end of the world, is while they are on their way from earth to Abraham's bosom. The saints even on earth have from time to time been admitted to converse with angels; and shall they not do so much more familiarly, when they go to be with Christ in paradise? The spirits of just men made perfect, are reckoned as of the same society with the angels, and as dwelling with them in mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, which the apostle elsc-

where calls "*Jerusalem which is above*," by which he doubtless means heaven. Why should not the saints go to be with the angels when they go from their bodies, seeing they are of the same family? The angels are their brethren: why should they be kept separate from the angels, who are their brethren in the same family? as the angel in the Revelation tells John he is of his brethren, Rev. xxii. 9. And if any would understand that, not of *a proper angel*, but *of the departed soul of one of the saints*, then will it make much more to our present purpose. If one of *them* was sent to reveal to John the providences of God relating to the church on earth, then certainly departed saints are acquainted with them. But that the departed saints do dwell in heaven with the angels, is most evident, because we learn by Eph. iii. 15, that the whole family is in heaven and in earth. Departed saints are doubtless of the family; the angels they also are of the family; saints and angels are all gathered together in one in Christ, Eph. i. 10, Colos. i. 16. 20. But none can doubt but that heaven is the dwelling-place of the angels.

It is no privilege to be continued in this world, to have opportunity to see here the success of the gospel and glorious things accomplished in the church. If this had been any privilege, the man Christ Jesus should have been allowed it: he saw very little success, while he was here, of all that he did and suffered; the success was chiefly after he went to heaven, and there he can see it better than if he were here; and this is part of his promised glory, that he there sees the success of his redemption, and his own kingdom carried on and flourishing in ths world, Isai. liii. 10, 11, 12. And it is the will of Christ, that departed saints should be with him where he is, that they may behold this glory of Christ, which the Father gives him, and be partakers with him in it. John xvii. 24.

[565] *Heaven—Separate spirits.* The happiness which the departed souls of the saints being with Christ before the resurrection, is proleptical, or by way of anticipation. This is not the proper time of their reward: the proper time of the reward and glory of saints is after the end of the world, when an end shall be put to the world's state of probation; then succeeds the state of retribution. When all the present dispensations of the covenant of grace shall be ended, and Christ shall have brought all enemies under his feet, and shall have fully accomplished the ends and designs of his mediatorial kingdom, and his own glory shall be fully obtained, and he shall have fully finished God's scheme in the series of revolutions in Divine Providence; then will be the time of Christ's joy and triumph, and then will be the proper time of judgment and retribution, and then will be the proper time of the reward and glory of Christ's followers. The state that spi-

rits of just men are in now is not the proper state of their reward; it is only a state wherein they are reserved against the time of their reward; it is the time wherein the pure chosen espoused virgin is reserved in the King's house against the day of marriage, and the joy and blessedness that they now enjoy with Christ in their conversation with him, though it appear to us unspeakably great, is only by way of prelibation of what is future, and therefore vastly short of it. Such is God's overflowing love to them, that, while they are only reserved for their designed glory, they shall be reserved in blessed abodes as a king would entertain her whom he reserves for marriage, and whom he loves with a strong and ardent love, in no mean manner, but in a way suitable to his love to her and his design concerning her. The state of the blessed souls in heaven is not merely a state of repose, but of a glorious degree of anticipation of their reward; as is evident by Heb. vi. 12: see my Notes on it. Thus it is God's way, from his overflowing goodness to his people, to grant a prelibation of blesings before the proper season. So the church of the Old Testament had an anticipation of gospel benefits before Christ came, and the gospel days commenced. So the saints now, are allowed in a measure to anticipate the blessedness that is to succeed the fall of Antichrist. Rev. vi. 9, 10, 11, "I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held, and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given to every one of them; and it was said unto them that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren also, which should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." Those *white robes* were the glory and reward which God gave them beforehand, the earnest of what was to be after Antichrist's fall. So the saints here in this world have that light, holiness, and joy, that is an anticipation and earnest of what they are to have in heaven; and what they have now in heaven is but an earnest of what they are to have afterwards at the consummation of all things, and when all things come to be settled in their fixed and eternal state. Therefore the apostle so often speaks of the reward and glory of the saints at Christ's second coming, and encourages Christians with that, without any mention of the glory which they shall receive before.

[571] *Heaven—Wisdom and the gloriousness of the work of redemption.* When the saints get to heaven, they shall not merely see Christ and have to do with him, as subjects and servants with a glorious and gracious Lord and Sovereign, but Christ will most freely and intimately converse with them as friends and brethren. This we may learn from the manner of Christ's conversing with

his disciples here on earth: though he was the supreme Lord of the disciples, and did not refuse, yea, required, their supreme respect and adoration; yet he did not treat them as earthly sovereigns are wont to do their subjects; he did not keep them at an awful distance, but all along conversed with them with the most friendly familiarity as with brethren, as a father amongst a company of children. So he did with the twelve, and so he did with Mary, and Martha, and Lazarus; he told his disciples that he did not call them servants, but he called them friends. So neither will he call his disciples servants, but friends, in heaven. Though Christ be in a state of exaltation at the right hand of God, and appears in an immense height of glory, yet this will not hinder his conversing with his saints in a most familiar and intimate manner; he will not treat his disciples with greater distance for his being in a state of exaltation, but he will rather take them into a state of exaltation with him. This will be the improvement Christ will make of his own glory, to make his beloved friends partakers with him, to glorify them in his glory, as Christ says to his Father, John xvii. 22, 23. "And the glory which thou hast given me, have I given them, that they may be one, even as we are one, I in them," &c. For we are to consider, that though Christ be greatly exalted, yet he is exalted not as a private person for himself only, but he is exalted as his people's head, and he is exalted in their name, and upon their account, and as one of them, as their representative, as the first fruits: he is not exalted that he may be more above them, and be at a greater distance from them, but that they may be exalted with him. The exaltation and honour of the head is not to make a greater distance between the head and the members, but the members and head have the same relation and union as they had before, and are honoured with the head.

When believers get to heaven, Christ will conform them to himself, he will give them his glory; they shall in their measure be made like to him; their bodies after the resurrection shall be conformed to his glorious body.

Christ, when he was going to heaven, comforted his disciples with that, that after a while he would come and take them to himself, that they might be with him again. And we are not to suppose, when the disciples got to heaven, though they found their Lord in a state of infinite exaltation, yet that they found him any more retiring or keeping at a greater distance from them than he used to do. No, he embraced them as friends, he welcomed them home to their common Father's house, he welcomed them to their common glory, who had been his friends here in this world, that had been together here, had lived here together, partook of sorrows and troubles, now welcomed them to their rest to partake of

glory with him, he took them and led them into his chambers, and showed them all his glory; as Christ prayed, John xvii. 24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me." And there ensued without doubt a most pleasant and free conversation between Christ and his disciples when they met together in their common rest and glory.

Christ did not behave with greater distance towards his disciples, after they had seen his transfiguration, than before; no, nor after his resurrection; nor will he in his highest exaltation in heaven.

Christ took on him man's nature for this end, that he might be under advantage for a more familiar conversation than the infinite distance of the divine nature would allow of; and such a communion and familiar conversation is suitable to the relation that Christ stands in to believers, as their representative, their brother, and the husband of the church. The church being so often called the spouse of Christ, intimates the greatest nearness, intimacy, and communion with God. Christ will conform his people to himself; he will give them his glory, the glory of his person; their souls shall be made like his soul, their bodies like to his glorious body; they shall partake with him in his riches, as co-heirs in his pleasures; he will bring them into his banqueting house, and they shall drink new wine with him; they shall partake with him in his dominion; they shall sit with him in his throne, and shall rule over the nations; they shall partake with him in the honour of judging the world at the last day. When Christ shall descend from heaven in the glory of his Father, in such awful and dreadful majesty, with all his holy angels, and all nations shall be gathered before the saints, at the same time shall they be as familiar with Christ as his disciples were when he was upon earth: they shall sit with him to judge with him. As Christ died as the head of believers, and in their name, and was exalted in their name, so shall he judge the world as their head and representative. It was God's design in this way to confound and triumph over Satan, viz. by making Man, whom he so despised, and envied, and thought to have had as a slave to lord it over, and thought to have glutted his own pride, and malice, and envy with his blood, and in his everlasting misery; I say, by making *Man* his judge. It was God's design that the elect of mankind should be Satan's Judge, and therefore the head of them, the elder brother of them, is appointed to this work in the room of the rest, and the rest are to be with him in it. God gave Christ "authority to execute judgment, because he is the Son of *Man*," John v. 27, partly upon this account we have mentioned.

The conversation of Christ's disciples in heaven shall in many respects be vastly more intimate than it was when Christ was upon

earth; vide Notes on John xx. 17; for in heaven the union shall be perfected. The union is but begun in this world, and there is a great deal remains in this world to separate and disunite them; but then all those obstacles of a close union and most intimate communion shall be removed. When the church is received to her consummate glory, that is her marriage with Christ, and therefore doubtless the conversation and enjoyment will be more intimate. This is not a time for that full acquaintance, and those manifestations of love which Christ designs towards his people.

When saints shall see Christ's divine glory and exaltation in heaven, this will indeed possess their hearts with the greater admiration and adoring respect; yet this will not keep them at a distance, but will only serve the more to heighten their surprise and pleasure, when they find Christ condescending to treat them in such a familiar manner.

The saints, being united to Christ, shall have a more glorious union with, and enjoyment of, the Father, than otherwise could be; for hereby their relation becomes much nearer, they are the children of God in a higher manner than otherwise they could be; for, being members of God's own Son, they are partakers of his relation to the Father, or of his Sonship; being members of the Son, they are partakers of the Father's love to the Son and his complacence in him. John xvii. 23. "I in them, and thou in me:——thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me;" and verse 26, "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them;" and xvi. 27, "The Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God." So they are, in this measure, partakers of the Son's enjoyment of his Father; they have his joy fulfilled in themselves, and by this means they come to a more familiar and intimate conversing with God the Father than otherwise ever would have been; for there is, doubtless, an infinite intimacy between the Father and the Son, and the saints being in him shall partake with him in it, and of the blessedness of it.

Such is the contrivance of our Redemption; thereby we are brought to an immensely more glorious and exalted kind of union with God and enjoyment of him, both the Father and the Son, than otherwise could have been. For, Christ being united to the human nature, we have advantage for a far more intimate union and conversation with him than we could possibly have had if he had remained only in the divine nature. So, we being united to a divine person, can in him have more intimate union and conversation with God the Father, who is only in the divine nature, than otherwise possibly could be. Christ, who is a divine person, by taking on him our nature, descended from the infinite distance

between God and us, and is brought nigh to us, to give us advantage to converse with him. So, on the other hand, we, by being in Christ, a divine person, ascend nearer to God the Father, and have advantage to converse with him. This was the design of Christ to bring it to pass that he, and his Father, and his people might be brought to a most intimate union and communion, John xvii. 21, 22, 23, "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me; and the glory which thou hast given me have I given them, that they may be made perfect in one." Christ has brought it to pass, that those that the Father has given him should be brought into the household of God, that he and his Father, and they should be as it were one society, one family, that his people should be in a sense admitted into the society of the Three Persons in the Godhead. In that family or household, God is the Father; Jesus Christ is his only begotten and eternal Son; the saints, they also are children in the family, they have all communion in the same spirit, the Holy Ghost.

Corol. I. Seeing that God hath designed men for such exceeding exaltation; it was but agreeable to his wisdom to bestow in such a way as should abase man and exalt his own free grace, and wherein man's entire, and absolute, and universal dependence on God should be most evident and conspicuous.

Corol. II. It is easy to observe the wisdom of God, that seeing he designed Man for such a height of glory, that it should be so ordered that he should be brought to it from the lowest depths of wretchedness and misery.

Corol. III. Hence we may learn something how vastly greater glory and happiness the elect are brought to by Christ than that which was lost by the fall, or even than that which man would have attained to if he had not fallen, for then man would never have had such an advantage for an intimate union and converse with the Father or Son, Christ remaining at an infinite distance from man in the divine nature, and man remaining at an infinite distance from the Father without being brought nigh by an union to a divine person.

Corol. IV. Hence we may see how God hath confounded Satan in actually fulfilling that which was a lie in him, wherewith he deluded poor man and procured his fall, viz. that they should be as gods. When Satan said so, he did not think that this would really be the fruit of it, he aimed at that which was infinitely contrary, his lowest depression, debasement, and ruin. But God has greatly frustrated him in fulfilling of it, in making the issue of eating that fruit to be the advancement of the elect to such an union with the persons of the Trinity and communion with them

in divine honour and blessedness, and particularly he united one of them, the head and representative of the rest, in a perfect union with the Godhead, and so to the honour, dominion, and work of God in ruling the world, and judging it, and particularly in judging the devils, in which all the rest of the elect, according to their measure, partake with him.

[576] *Heaven's happiness.* If nothing be too much to be given to man, and to be done for man in the means of procuring his happiness, nothing will be too much to be given to him as the end, no degree of happiness is too great for him to enjoy.

When I think how great this happiness is, sometimes it is ready to seem almost incredible. But the death and sufferings of Christ make every thing credible that belongs to this blessedness; for if God would so contrive to show his love in the manner and means of procuring our happiness, nothing can be incredible in the degree of the happiness itself; if all that God doth about it be of a piece, he will also set infinite wisdom on work to make their happiness and glory great in the degree of it. If God spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Nothing could have been such a confirmation of their blessedness as this.

[585] *Heaven's happiness.* It has sometimes looked strange to me, that men should be ever brought to such exceeding happiness as that of heaven seems to be, because we find that here Providence will not suffer any great degree of happiness: when men have something in which they hope to find very great joy, there will be something to spoil it. Providence seems watchfully to take care they should have no exceeding joy and satisfaction in this world. But indeed this, instead of being one argument against the greatness of heaven's happiness, seems to argue for it; for we cannot suppose that the reason why Providence will not suffer men to enjoy great happiness here is, that he is averse to the creature's happiness, but because this is not a time for it. To every thing there is an appointed season and time, and this agreeable to God's method of dispensation, that a thing should be sought in vain out of its appointed time. God reserves happiness to be bestowed hereafter that is the appointed time for it, and that is the reason he does not give it now. No man, let him be never so strong or wise, shall alter this divine establishment by anticipating happiness before his appointed time. It is so in all things: sometimes there is an appointed time for man's prosperity upon earth, and then nothing can hinder their prosperity; and then when that time is past, then comes an appointed time for his adversity, and then all things conspire for his ruin, and all his strength and skill shall not help him. History verifies this with respect to many kings, generals, and great men; one while they conquer all, and

nothing can stand before them; all things conspire for their advancement, and all that oppose it are confounded, and after a while it is right the reverse. So has it been with respect to the kingdoms and monarchies of the world; one while is their time to flourish, and then God will give all into their hands, and will destroy those that oppose their flourishing, and then after that comes the time of their decay and ruin, and then every thing runs backward, and all helpers are vain. Jer. xxvii.

[639] *Heaven.* Whether the saints, when they go to heaven, have any special comfort in their meeting with those that were their godly friends on earth: I think that it is evident that they will, by 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, and the following verses, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Here,

1. It seems to me that what the apostle mentions here as matter of comfort to mourners, is, not only that their departed friends, though dead, shall be happy; they are not so miserable in being dead as persons are ready to imagine, because they shall rise again; but that they shall meet them and see them again, seems to be intimated in the manner of expression, "God shall bring them to them." Christians mourn when their near friends are dead, because they are departed and gone; they are parted from them; but when they rise God shall bring them to them again; and this is further confirmed by the following verses, especially the 17th and 18th. "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord; wherefore comfort one another with these words;" where the apostle may well be understood that they should comfort one another, when mourners, with the consideration that they should be hereafter again with their departed friends, and in a glorious and happy state.

2. I think it is evident hereby that there will be something else that will be comfortable in meeting them in a future state than in seeing other saints. The apostle doubtless mentions it as what may be a comfortable consideration to them, that they shall again see and converse with the same persons; implying that they will have a different comfort in seeing them from what they would in seeing other saints; otherwise, why did the apostle mention it for their comfort, that they should see *them* again, rather than any other saints that they had seen or heard of? The apostle's speaking thus to the Thessalonians, might give them just ground to expect that that peculiarly dear affection which they cherished for their departed friends, which was crossed by their departure, would be

again gratified by meeting them again; for this crossing of that affection was the ground of their mourning. If the Thessalonians knew that to see their friends again in another world would be no gratification to their affection which they had to them as their friends, and did no way think or conceive of it as such, then to think of it would be no more comfort to them or remedy to their mourning than to think that they should see any other saint that lived and died in another country, or a past age; and that because it would be no remedy to the ground and foundation of their mourning, viz. the crossing of their affections to them as their friends; and if it would be no remedy to their mourning to think of it, it never would have been mentioned to them by the apostle as a ground of comfort, or a reason why they need not mourn. That was what they mourned for, viz. that they should not have their affections towards them gratified by seeing of them, conversing with them, &c. That was what the heathen, here spoken of, that have no hope, mourned excessively for, that they should never more have that affection gratified. The apostle here would inform them that they have not this ground to mourn which the heathen had, because they should have their affection gratified again.

Hence it follows, that the special affection which the saints have in this world to other saints, who are their friends, will in some respect remain in another world. I do not see why we should not suppose that saints that have dwelt together in this world, and have done and received kindness to each other's souls, have been assistant to each other's true happiness, should not love one another with a love of gratitude for it in another world, and that the joy in meeting those and seeing their happiness is part of that joy that is spoken of, 2 Cor. i. 14. "As also ye have acknowledged us in part, that we are your rejoicing, even as ye also are ours in the day of the Lord Jesus; and 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20, "For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing: are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye are our glory and joy." Or why those that have loved one another with a virtuous love, and from such a love have shown kindness one to another, should not love one another the better for it in another world? God and Christ will reward them and favour them the more for such love, and all the fruits of it, to all eternity; and I do not see why they should not love one another the more for it. Neither do I see how it argues infirmity for a saint in glory to have a special respect to another, because God made use of him as an instrument to bring him into being, and so is the remote occasion of his eternal blessedness; or because he himself was the occasion of bringing the other into being; or that the same agreeableness of temper, which is the foundation of special friend-

ship here, may be so also in another world, or even that a former acquaintance with persons, and their virtues, may occasion a particular respect in another world. They may go to heaven with a desire to see them upon that account; the idea that they have of them by their acquaintance here, may be what they carry to heaven with them; and the idea we have of the proper object of our love may be an occasion of the exercises of love, especially towards that object, and more than towards another of which we have not the idea.

This should move us to lay religion and virtue on the foundadation of all our friendship, and to strive that the love we have to our friends be a virtuous love, duly subordinated to divine love; for, so far as it is so, it will last for ever. Death does not put an end to such friendship, nor can it put an end to such friends' enjoyment of each other.

[666] *Separate state.* Texts made use of by Dr. Watts in his essay to prove a separate state: Ps. lxxiii. 24. 26. Eccles. xii. 7. Isai. lvii. 2. Luke ix. 30, 31. Acts vii. 59. 2 Cor. v. 1, 2. 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. It shows that St. Paul thought that a soul might exist, think, know, and act, in paradise, in a state of separation. (Vide my Notes on the text.) Philip. i. 21. 1 Thess. iv. 14. 1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 20. Spirits in prison: Jude vii. Rev. vi. 9. Heb. xi. 14. The Jews generally supposed separate spirits; and Christ did not correct them. Matth. xiv. 26. Luke xxiv. 36, &c. Acts xxiii. 8, 9. More evident proofs: Matth. x. 28. Luke xvi. 22, &c. Luke xx. 37, 38. Luke xxiii. 42, 43. 2 Cor. v. 6. 8. Philip. i. 23, 24. Heb. xii. 23. 2 Peter i. 13, 14. To which may be added, Acts i. 25. See my Note on Heb. xii. 1. Blank Bible, p. 766.

[678] *Beatifical vision.* Whether there be any visible appearance or glory, that is the symbol of the divine presence, in which God manifests himself in heaven, beside the glorified body of Christ: See of the Beatifical Vision, in my sermon from these words, Rom. ii. 10, "But glory, honour, and peace, to every one that worketh good."

[679] *Goodness of God—Love of God—Happiness of heaven.* God stands in no need of creatures, and is not profited by them; neither can his happiness be said to be added to by the creature. But yet God has a real and proper delight in the excellency and happiness of his creatures: he hath a real delight in the excellency and loveliness of the creature, in his own image in the creature, as that is a manifestation, or expression, or shining forth of his own loveliness. God has a real delight in his own loveliness, and he also has a real delight in the shining forth, or glorifying of it. As it is a fit and condescent thing that God's glory should shine forth, so God delights in its shining forth: So

that God has a real delight in the spiritual loveliness of the saints; which delight is not a delight distinct from what he has in himself, but is to be resolved into the delight he has in himself; for he delights in his image in the creature, as he delights in his own being glorified; or as he delights in it, that his own glory shines forth, and so he hath real proper delight in the happiness of his creatures, which also is not distinct from the delight that he has in himself, for it is to be resolved into the delight that he has in his own goodness; for as he delights in his own goodness, so he delights in the exercise of his goodness, and therefore he delights to make the creature happy, and delights to see him made happy, as he delights in exercising goodness, or communicating happiness. This is no proper addition to the happiness of God, because it is that which he eternally, and unalterably had. God hath no new delight when he beholds his own glory shining forth in his image in the creature, and when he beholds the creature made happy from the exercises of his goodness; because those and all things are from eternity equally present with God. This delight in God cannot properly be said to be received from the creature, because it consists only in a delight in giving to the creature; neither will it hence follow that God is dependent on the creature for any of his joy, because it is his own act only that this delight is dependent on, and the creature is absolutely dependent on God for that excellency and happiness that God delights in. God cannot be said to be the more happy for the creature, because he is infinitely happy in himself, and he is not dependent on the creature for any thing, nor does he receive any addition from the creature. But yet in one sense it can be truly said that God has the more delight for the loveliness and happiness of the creature, viz. as God would be less happy if he were less good, or if it were possible for him to be hindered in exercising his own goodness, or to be hindered from glorifying himself. God has no addition to his happiness, when he exercises any act of holiness towards his creatures; and yet God has a real delight in the exercises of his own holiness, and would be less happy if he were less holy, or were capable of being hindered from any act of holiness.

Corol. I. Hence when the saints get to heaven they will have this to rejoice them, and add to their blessedness, that God hath a real delight and joy in them, in their holiness and happiness.

Corol. II. Hence God's love to the saints is real and proper love; so that those have been to blame, who have represented, much to the prejudice of religion, the love of God to creatures as if it were merely a purpose in God of acting as the creature does that has love.

Corol. III. Hence we learn how all God's love may be resolved into his love to himself, and delight in himself. His love to the creature is only his inclination to glorify himself, and communicate himself; and his delight in himself glorified, and in himself communicated. There is his delight in the *act*, and in the *fruit:* the act is the exercise of his own perfection; and the fruit is himself expressed and communicated.

[701] *Happiness of heaven increasing.* It is certain that the inhabitants of heaven do increase in their knowledge, "the angels know more than they did before Christ's Incarnation, for they are said to know *by the church*, i. e. by the dealings of God with the church, *the manifold wisdom of God:* and to desire to look into the account the gospel gives of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." Ridgley's Body of Divinity, p. 61, 62. vol. 1.

[710] *Heaven—Separate state—Resurrection—Dispensations.* How the happiness of the resurrection state will exceed the present happiness in heaven. It looks to me probable, that the glory of the state of the church after the resurrection will as much exceed the present glory of the spirits of just men made perfect, as the glory of the gospel dispensation exceeds the Mosaic dispensation; or as much as the glory of the state of the church in its first or purest state of it, or rather in its state in the *Millennium*, (wherein alone the glory of the gospel dispensation will be fully manifested,) exceeds the state of the church under the law, and as much as the state, the company, of glorified souls exceed this. Of old, under the Mosaic dispensation, the church saw things very darkly, they saw as it were by a reflex light, as we see the light of the sun by that of the moon; they saw gospel things in dark types and shadows, and in dark sayings, that were, as it were, riddles, or enigmas. The glory of that dispensation was no glory in comparison of the glory of the evangelical dispensation it so much excels, but under the gospel dispensation those dark shadows are ceased, and instead of enigmas or dark sayings, the apostle uses great plainness of speech. 2 Cor. iii. 12. The night in which we saw by a reflex light only, is ceased, and Christ is actually come, we enjoy day-light, John the Baptist was the day-star to usher in the day; and when he was born, the day-spring from on high visited us, as Zachariah his father sang. Luke i. 78, 79. And when Christ himself came, the sun rose; especially when he rose from the dead, and shed forth his light and heat on the day of Pentecost; and now we see the sun by his own direct light, we see him immediately, the veil is taken away, and we all see with open face. 2 Cor. iii. 18. But still, even under the gospel dispensation, we see by a reflex light, we see only the image in a looking-glass in comparison of what we shall in the future state.

1 Cor. xiii. 12. We understand not by plain speeches and declarations, but as in an enigma, or dark saying, as it is said in the same place; for the things of heaven cannot be expressed as they be in our language. The apostle, when he went there, said of them that it was not lawful, or possible to utter them. But when the souls of the saints are separated from their bodies, they shall no longer see heavenly things as in an enigma, or dark saying, for they shall go themselves to heaven to dwell there, and shall immediately see and hear those things that it is not possible or lawful to utter plainly, or know immediately in this world. They shall then no longer see Christ by reflexion as in a looking-glass, because they shall be where Christ himself shall be immediately present; for they that are departed are with Christ, they that are absent from the body are present with the Lord; when that which is perfect is come, then we shall no more see by a looking-glass or enigma, but shall see face to face, as the apostle shows, 1 Cor. xiii. 10. 12. "But when that which is perfect is come," is said with respect to the separate souls of the saints, as is evident by Heb. xii. 23; for they are there called the spirits of just men *made perfect;* and therefore when the soul of the saint leaves the body and goes to heaven, it will be like coming out of the dim light of the night into day-light. The present state is a dark benighted state; but when the soul enters into heaven, it is like the rising of the sun, for they shall then see the Sun of Righteousness, by his own direct light, because they shall be with him, they will be spirits made perfect in that respect, that is, it will be perfect day with them. Prov. iv. 18. We cannot in the present state see clearly, because we have a veil before us, even the veil of the flesh. The church is Christ mystical: the church in the Old Testament state was represented by Christ in his fleshly state, such as he was in before his death; for Christ was the head of that church in that state, and was subject to the same ordinances with them, was under the same dispensation with his church till his death.

His flesh was as it were a veil that hindered our access to heavenly things, or seeing them immediately. When Christ died, this veil was rent from the top to the bottom, and the holy of holies, with the ark of the testament, were opened to view; and especially will this be fulfilled in the glorious period of this evangelical dispensation, when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, Rev. xi. 15. 19. But still the church of Christ has a veil before it, to hinder it from seeing immediately things in the holy of holies; and this veil is their flesh, which is mystically the flesh of Christ. Christ in his members is still in his fleshly state, but when the saints die this veil is rent from the top to the bottom, and a glorious prospect will be opened through this veil.

The day is a time of glory in comparison of the night, because of the sun that is then seen, which is the glory of the visible universe, and by his light fills the world with glory. So the gospe state of the church is spoken of as a state of glory, in comparison of its Old Testament state. 1 Peter i. 11. "Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify when it testified beforehand, the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow." 2. Cor. iii. 10. "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth;" and this state was prophecied of, of old, as a state of glory, but the state of the holy separate souls, is a state of glory in comparison of the present state. Ps. lxxiii. 24. 26. "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory——my flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever." So it is said of Moses, and Elijah, who were in the state that the saints are now in heaven, that at Christ's transfiguration they appeared in glory. Luke ix. 30, 31.

But yet the glorified souls of saints in their present state in heaven, though they cannot be said properly to see as in an enigma, is but darkly, in comparison of what they will see after the resurrection. Therefore, though we are said now to see with open face, in comparison of what they did under the Old Testament; and though separate souls in heaven see face to face, in comparison of what we do now; yet the sight that the saints shall have at the resurrection, is spoken of as it were the first sight wherein they should see him as he is. 1 John iii. 2. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." The glory of Christ is what will as it were then first appear to all the church, to all that shall then lift up their heads out of their graves to behold it, as well as to those that will then be alive. It is called the blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ, with respect to both those companies of which the church consists. The apostle speaks of it as what would be a glorious appearing to them, to the Christians that were then living; Tit. ii. 13; which implies something that will be seen anew, as though he had been till then unseen. That appearing of Christ will be like the appearing of the sun when it rises to all, both those that shall then be found alive, and those that will then rise: it will be to them both as the morning succeeding the dim light of the night. Ps. xlix. 14. "The upright shall have dominion over them in the morning." Though, in the state the saints are now in heaven, there is no proper darkness, because there is no evil, yet the light they have is dim, like the light of the night, in comparison

of the glorious light that shall appear in that morning. The happiness that separate souls have now in heaven is like the quiet rest that a person has in bed, before a wedding day, or some other joyful and glorious day, in comparison of the light and joy after the resurrection. Isai. lvii. 1, 2. "The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful men are taken away, none considering that the righteous are taken away from the evil to come. He shall enter into peace. They shall rest in their beds, each one walking in his uprightness." 1 Thess. iv. 14, 15. "Them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep." The morning of the natural day when the sun rises, and persons awake out of sleep, and the face of the whole world is revived, seems to be a type of the resurrection, when the saints shall awake out of sweet repose to glory.

The saints now in heaven see God or the divine nature by a reflex light, comparatively with the manner in which they will see it after the resurrection, seeing now through the glass of the glorified human nature of Christ, and in that glass of his works especially relating to redemption, as was observed No. 702.

Of old under the Old Testament, the church of Christ was as a child; Gal. iv. 1; so still under the gospel dispensation the church on earth is as a child, in comparison of what the church of glorified souls in heaven is, where what is perfect is come. 1 Cor. xiii. 10, 11. "But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away; when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." But yet the church remains a child, and does not come to the stature of a man until the resurrection. Eph. iv. 10—13. "He that descended is the same also that ascended far above all heavens, that he might fill all things; and he gave some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry, for the edifying the body of Christ, till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto them easure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." But this will not be till that time comes, when the work of those offices ceases, which will not be till the end of the world, and there be no further use of them. Math. xxviii. 20. It will not be till the time comes when he that is ascended shall descend again. It will not be till the church has all its members; and all its members are delivered

from all remaining corruption; and all are brought to their consummate glory.

Of old the church was in a preparatory state, as a woman preparing for her marriage. The coming of Christ, his destroying the Jewish state and church; and setting up the gospel dispensation, is compared to the coming of the bridegroom, and his marriage with the church; the gospel day, to the wedding day; and the provision of God's house under the gospel to the wedding feast; and gospel ministers, to servants sent out to invite persons to the wedding; Math. xxii. at the beginning; and Isai. lxi. 10. And especially is the most glorious time of the Christian church on earth, when the glories of the gospel dispensation shall be most fully manifested, called the marriage of the Lamb. Rev. xix. 7. "Let us be glad, and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready," &c. But yet the translation of the soul from the earthly to the heavenly state at death, is represented as its marriage to Christ, and therefore, Christ's coming by death, is called the coming of the bridegroom, in the beginning of the xxv. chap. of Matthew. One thing that Christ has there respect to, is his coming by death: This is the application Christ makes of it; in the 13th verse, Christ speaks of the coming of the bridegroom as what would be sudden and unexpected, and as it were at midnight, to them that then were his hearers; and what they therefore should continually watch and wait for, that they might not be found slumbering and sleeping as the foolish virgins were. "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh." But this manner of speaking is not applicable to those that were then living with respect to Christ's last coming at the end of the world, but with regard to his coming by death. But yet the glorification of the church after the last judgment is represented as the proper marriage of the Lamb. Rev. xxi. 2. "I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God, out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband;" and ver. 9. "Come hither, I will show thee the bride the Lamb's wife." See Luke xiv. 14, 15, 16, &c. compared with Matth. xxii. at the beginning. See No. 774, Corol. 5.

[721] *Happiness of Heaven after the resurrection—Their external blessedness and delight.* As the saints after the resurrection will have an external part, or an outward man, distinct from their souls, so it necessarily follows that they shall have external perception, or sense, and, doubtless, then all their sense, and all the perception that they have will be delighted and filled with happiness—every perceptive faculty shall be an inlet of delight. Particularly then, doubtless, they will have the seeing, which is

the noblest of all the external senses, and then, without doubt, the most noble sense will receive most pleasure and delight. This sense will be immensely more perfect than now it is, and the external light of the heavenly world will be a perfectly different kind of light from the light of the sun, or any light in this world, exciting sensations or ideas in the beholders perfectly different, of which we can no more conceive than we can conceive of a colour we never saw, or than a blind man can conceive of light and colours: a sort of light immensely more pleasant and glorious; in comparison of which the sun is a shade, and his light but darkness; and this world, full of the light of the sun, is a world under the darkness of night, but that a world of light affording inexpressible pleasure and delight to the beholders, immensely exceeding all sensitive delights in this world. That the light of heaven, which will be the light of the brightness of Christ's glorious body, shall be a perfectly different sort of light from that of this world, seems evident from Rev. xxi. 11; and that it will be so, and will also be ravishingly sweet to the eye, is evident from the circumstances of Christ's transfiguration; (see Note on 2 Peter i. 11, to the end); and also from the circumstances of Moses's vision of God in the Mount. (See Note on Exod. xxxiii. 18, to the end; ff No. 266.)

But yet this pleasure from external perception will, in a sense, have God for its object, it will be in a sight of Christ's external glory, and it will be so ordered in its degree and circumstances as to be wholly and absolutely subservient to a spiritual sight of that divine spiritual glory, of which this will be a semblance, and external representation, and subservient to the superior spiritual delights of the saints; as the body will in all respects be a spiritual body, and subservient to the happiness of the spirit, and there will be no tendency to, or danger of, inordinacy, or predominance. This visible glory will be subservient to a sense of spiritual glory, as the music of God's praises is to the holy sense and pleasure of the mind; and more immediately so, because this that will be seen by the bodily eye will be God's glory, but that music will not be so immediately God's harmony.

[741] *Happiness of heaven.* There is scarce any thing that can be conceived of or expressed, about the degree of the happiness of the saints in heaven, the degree of intimacy, of union, and communion with Christ, and fullness of enjoyment of God, for which the consideration of the nature and circumstances of our redemption by Christ do not allow us and encourage us to hope. This redemption leaves nothing to hinder our highest exaltation, and the utmost intimacy, and fullness of enjoyment of God. Our being such guilty creatures would be no hinderance, because the blood of Christ has perfectly removed that, and by

his obedience he hath procured the contrary for us in the highest perfection and glory. The meanness of our nature need be no hinderance, for Christ is in our nature. There is an infinite distance between the human nature and the divine; the divine nature has that infinite majesty and greatness, whereby it is impossible that we should immediately approach to that, and converse with that, with that intimacy with which we might do to one who is in our own nature. Job wished for a near approach to God; but his complaint was that his mean nature did not allow of so near an approach to God as he desired: God's majesty was too great for him. Job ix. 32, &c. But now we have not this to keep us from the utmost nearness of access and intimacy of communion with Christ; for, to remove this obstacle wholly out of the way, Christ has come down, and taken upon him our nature: he is as Elihu tells Job *he* was according to his wish. He is a man as we are; he also is formed out of the clay. This the church anciently wished for, before it came to pass, to that end that she might have greater opportunity of near access and intimacy of communion. Cant. viii. 1. "O that thou wert my brother, that sucked the breasts of my mother, when I should find thee without I would kiss thee, yea, I should not be despised." Christ descending so low in uniting himself to our nature, tends to invite and encourage us to ascend to the most intimate converse with him, and encourages us that we shall be accepted and not despised therein; for we have this to consider of, that let us be never so bold in this kind of ascending, for Christ to allow us and accept us in it will not be a greater humbling himself than to take upon him our nature. Christ was made flesh and dwelt among us in a nature infinitely below his original nature, for this end, that we might have, as it were, the full possession and enjoyment of him. Again, it shows how much God designed to communicate himself to men, that he so communicated himself to the first and chief of elect men, the elder brother, and the head and representative of the rest, even so that this man should be the same person with one of the persons of the Trinity. It seems by this to have been God's design to admit man as it were to the inmost fellowship with the Deity. There was, as it were, an eternal society in the Godhead in the Trinity of persons; and it seems to be God's design to admit the church into the divine family; so that which Satan made use of as a temptation to our first parents, "*Ye shall be as gods*," shall be fulfilled contrary to his design. The saints' enjoyment of Christ shall be like the Son's intimate enjoyment of the Father, John xvii. 21, 22, 23, 24. "That they may be all one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou has sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, have I given them, that they may be one

even as we are one ; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, even as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." Ver. 26. "That the love wherewith thou hast loved me, may be in them, and I in them." The Son's intimate enjoyment of the Father is expressed by this, that he is *in the bosom of the Father;* so we read that one of Christ's disciples *leaned on his bosom*, John xiii. 23. These things imply not only that the saints shall have such an intimate enjoyment of the Son, but that they, through the Son, shall have a most intimate enjoyment of the Father; which may be argued from this, that the way which God hath contrived to bring them to their happiness, is to unite them to the Son as members, which doubtless is that they may partake with the head, to whom they are so united, in his good. And so "our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John i. 3.

We have all reason to conclude that no degree of intimacy will be too much for the manhood of Christ, seeing that the divine Logos has been pleased to assume him into his very person ; and therefore we may conclude that no degree of intimacy will be too great for others to be admitted to, of whom Christ is the head or chief, according to their capacity ; for this is in some sort an example of God's love to manhood, that he hath so advanced manhood. He hath done this to the head of manhood, to show forth what honour and happiness God designs for manhood ; for the end of God's assuming this particular manhood was the honour and happiness of the rest. Surely, therefore, we may well argue the greatness of the happiness of the rest from it. The assumption of their particular manhood of Christ was but as a means of the honour and advancement of the rest, and we may well argue the end from the means, and the excellency of the one from the excellency of the other.

Christ took on him our nature, that he might become our brother, and our companion. The saints are called Christ's *brethren*, Heb. ii. and his *followers*. Heb. i. 9. "God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Ps. xlv. 8. The Hebrew word properly signifies *a companion :* חבר comes from a root that properly signifies *to consecrate*, or *to be joined with*. This teaches both the saints intimate converse with, and enjoyment of, Christ, and their fel-

lowship with him, or being joined with him, in partaking with him in his glory and happiness.

But nothing so much confirms these things as the death and sufferings of Christ. "He that hath not withheld his own Son, but hath freely delivered him up for us all in death, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" If the consideration of the greatness of Christ's condescension, in taking on him our nature, invites us to ascend high in our intimacy with him, and encourages us that he will condescend to allow us and accept us in it; much more does his so condescending and humbling himself as he did in his last sufferings. No degree of the enjoyment of God that we can suppose can require grace and condescension that exceeds what was requisite in order to God's giving Christ to die, or will be a greater expression of love. Christ will not descend lower, nor shall we ascend higher, in having Christ for us, and giving himself to us in such a high degree of enjoyment, than to give himself to us to be our sacrifice, and to be for us in such a degree of suffering. It is certainly as much for God to give his Son to bear his wrath towards, as it is to admit us to partake of, his love towards him.

The latter in no respect seems no more too much to do for a creature, and for a mean worthless creature, than the former. Surely the majesty of God that did not hinder the one will not hinder the other, especially considering that one is the end of the other, we may more easily conceive that God would go far in bestowing happiness on an inferior nature, than that he would go far in bringing sufferings on an infinitely superior divine person; for the former is in itself agreeable to his nature, to the attribute of his goodness; but bringing suffering and evil on an innocent and glorious person, is in itself, in some respect, against his nature. If, therefore, God hath done the latter in such a degree for those that are inferior, how shall he not freely do the former? It will not be in any respect a greater gift for Christ thus to give himself in enjoyment, than it was for him to give himself in suffering.

The sufferings of Christ for believers, also argue the greatness of intimacy with Christ, and fullness of enjoyment of him that believers shall have, as it shows the fullness of *propriety* they shall have in him, or right that they have to him. *Propriety* in any person is just ground of boldness of access and freedom in enjoyment.

The beloved disciple John would not have made so free with Jesus Christ as to lean on his bosom, had not he looked upon him as *his own*. Christ did in effect give himself to the elect, to be theirs from eternity in the same covenant with the Fa-

ther, in which the Father gave them to him to be his; and therefore Christ ever looked on himself to be theirs, and they his, and Christ looked on himself to be much theirs, that he as it were spent himself for them. When he was on the earth, he had, in the eternal covenant of redemption, given his life to them, and so looked upon it as theirs, and laid it down for them when their good required it; he looked on his blood as theirs, and so spilt it for them when it was needed for their happiness; he looked on his flesh as theirs, and so gave it for their life. John vi. 51. "The bread I will give is my flesh." His heart was theirs; he had given it to them in the eternal covenant, and therefore he yielded it up to be broken for them, and to spill out his heart's blood for them, being pierced by the wrath of God for their sins. He looked on his soul to be theirs, and therefore he poured out his soul unto death, and made his soul an offering for their sins. Thus he from eternity gave himself to them, and looked on them as having so great a propriety in him as amounted to his thus spending and being spent for them. And as he gave himself to them from eternity, so he is theirs to eternity; the right they have to him is an everlasting right; he is theirs, and will be for ever theirs. Now what greater ground can there be for believers to come boldly to Christ, and use the utmost liberty in access to him, and enjoyment of him? Will it argue Christ to be theirs in a higher degree, for them to be admitted to the most perfectly intimate, free, and full enjoyment of Christ, than for him so to be as it were perfectly spent for them, and utterly consumed in such extreme sufferings, and in the furnace of God's wrath?

Again: If his enemies were admitted to be so free with Christ in persecuting and afflicting; if Christ, as it were, yielded himself wholly into their hands to be mocked and spit upon, and that they might be as bold as they would in deriding and trampling on him, and might execute their utmost malice and cruelty to make way for his friends' enjoyment of him; doubtless his friends, for whom this was done, will be allowed to be as free with him in enjoying of him: he will yield himself as freely up to his friends to enjoy him, as he did to be abused by his enemies, seeing the former was the end of the latter. Christ will surely give himself as much to his saints as he has given himself for them.

He whose arms were expanded to suffer, to be nailed to the cross, will doubtless be opened as wide to embrace those for whom he suffered. He whose side, whose vitals, whose heart was opened to the spear of his enemies, to give access to their malice and cruelty, and to let out his blood, will doubtless be opened to admit the love of his saints. They may freely come

even *ad intima Christi*, whence the blood hath issued for them, the blood hath made way for them.

God and Christ, who have begrudged nothing as too great to be done, too good to be given, as the means of the saints' enjoyment of happiness, will not begrudge any thing in the enjoyment itself.

The awful majesty of God now will not be in the way to hinder perfect freedom and intimacy in the enjoyment of God, any more than if God were our equal; because that majesty has already been fully displayed, vindicated and glorified in Christ's blood: all that the honour of God's awful majesty requires, is abundantly answered already, by so great sufferings of so great a person. A sense of those wonderful sufferings of Christ for their sins will be ever fixed in their minds, and a sense of their dependence on those sufferings as the means of their obtaining that happiness. Sufficient care is taken in the method of salvation, that all, that have the benefit of Christ's salvation and the comforts and joys of it, should have them sensibly on that foundation, that with their joys and comforts they should have a sense of their dependence on those sufferings and their validity, and that comforts should arise on the foundation of such a sense; and as God began to bestow comforts in this way here, so he will go on in heaven, for the joy and glory of heaven shall be enjoyed as in Christ as the members of the Lamb slain, and the divine love and glory shall be manifested through him; and the sense they will have of this, together with a continued sight of the punishment of affronting this majesty in those who were of the same nature and circumstances with themselves, will be sufficient to keep up a due sense of the infinite awful majesty of God, without their being kept at a distance; even though all possible nearness and liberty should be allowed. All the ends of divine majesty are already answered fully and perfectly, so as to prepare the way for the most perfect union and communion without the least injury to the honour of that majesty.

Though it might seem that an admission to such a kind of fellowship with God perhaps could not be, without God's own suffering; yet when Jesus Christ, a divine person, united to our nature, has been slain, way is made for it, seeing that he has been dead: the veil is rent from the top to the bottom by the death of Christ; nothing of awful distance towards the believer can now be of any use, the way is all open to the boldest and nearest access, and he that was dead and alive again is ours fully and freely to enjoy.

Again. We may further argue from the misery of the damned, as God will have no manner of regard to the welfare of the damned, will have no pity, no merciful care, lest they should be too

miserable; they will be perfectly lost and thrown away by God as to any manner of care for their good, or defence from any degree of misery; there will be no merciful restraint to God's wrath; so on the contrary with respect to the saints there will be no happiness too much for them; God will not begrudge any thing as too good for them; there will be no restraint to his love, no restraint to their enjoyment of himself; nothing will be too full, too inward and intimate for them to be admitted to, but Christ will say to his saints, as in Cant. v. 1, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundance, O beloved."

Corol. I. *Humiliation.* Hence we may see a reason why *Humiliation* should be required, in order to a title to those benefits; and why such abundant love has been exercised in all God's dispensations with fallen man to make provision for man's humiliation and self-diffidenee, and self-emptiness; why it is so ordered and contrived that it should not be by our own righteousness, but altogether by the righteousness of another, viz. that there might be the more effectual provision to keep the creature humble, and in the place of a creature in such exceeding exaltation, and that the honour of God's majesty and exaltation above the creature might in all be maintained; and how needful it is to believe those truths, and how far those *doctrines* are *fundamental* or important that tend to this; and how much they militate against the design and drift of God in the contrivance for our redemption, that maintain contrary doctrines.

Corol. II. Hence we may learn that a believer has more to be free and bold in his access to Christ than to any other person in heaven or earth. The Papist's *worship angels and saints* as intercessors between Christ and them; because they say it is too much boldness to go to Christ, without some one to intercede for them; but we have far more to embolden and encourage us to go freely and immediately to Christ, than we can have to any of the angels. The angels are none of them so near to us as Christ is; we have not that propriety in them; yea, we have a great deal more to encourage and invite us to freedom of access to, and communion with, Christ, than with a fellow-worm. There is not the thousandth parth of that to draw us to freedom and nearness towards them, as there is towards Christ. Yea, though Christ is so much above us, yet he is nearer to us than the saints themselves, for our nearness to them is by him; our relation to them is through him.

[743] *New heavens and new earth—Consummation of all things—Heaven.* The place of God's eternal residence, and the place of the everlasting residence and reign of Christ, and his church, will be heaven; and not this lower world, purified and refined. Heaven is every where in scripture represented as the

throne of God, and that part of the universe that is God's fixed abode, and dwelling place, and that is everlastingly appropriated to that use. Other places are mentioned in scripture as being places of God's residence for a time, as mount Sinai, and the land of Canaan, the temple, the holy of holies; but yet God is represented as having dwelt in heaven before he dwelt in those places. Gen. xix. 24; Exod. iii. 8; Job xxii. 12—14; Gen. xxviii. 12. And when God is spoken of as dwelling in those places, he is represented as coming down out of heaven. So he is represented as coming on mount Sinai. Gen. xix. 11, v. 18, v. 20; Exod. xx. 22; Deut. iv. 36; Nehem. ix. 13. So he is represented as coming to the temple. 2 Chron. vii. 3. So when the cloud of glory first came on the tabernacle, Exod. *ult.* 34, it doubtless was the same cloud that till then abode on mount Sinai; but God had first descended from heaven on mount Sinai, and while God did dwell in the tabernacle and temple, he was represented as still dwelling in heaven, as being still his original, proper, and everlasting dwelling place, and dwelling in the temple and tabernacle, in a far inferior manner. 1 Kings viii. 30. "When they shall pray towards this place, then hear thou in heaven, thy dwelling place." So verses 32. 34. 36. 39. 43. 45. 49; Ps. xi. 4. "The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven." Deut. xxxiii. 26. "There is none like the God of Jeshurun, who rideth on the heavens in thine help, and in his excellency on the sky." Ps. xx. 6. "Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed: he will hear him from his holy heaven." Deut. xxvi. 15; Isai. lxiii. 15; Lam. iii. 50; 1 Chron. xxi. 26; 2 Chron. vi. 21. 23. 27. 30; and chap. vii. 14; Neh. ix. 27, 28; Ps. xiv. 2; and liii. 2; Ps. xxxiii. 13, 14. "The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men from the place of his habitation, he looketh on all the inhabitants of the earth;" Ps. lvii. 3; lxxvi. 8; lxxx. 14; cii. 19; "For he hath looked from the height of his sanctuary, from heaven did the Lord behold the earth." Eccles. v. 8; "God is in heaven, and thou on the earth," 2 Kings ii. 1, "would take up Elijah into heaven," and so we have an account how he was taken up, ver. 11; 2 Chron. xxx. 27; Ps. lxviii. 4. 33; cxxiii. 1; "Unto thee lift I up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens;" Ps. cxv. 2, 3; "Wherefore should the heathen say, Where is now their God? Our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he pleased;" Lam. iii. 41; 2 Chron. xx. 19; Job xxxi. 2; Ps. cxiii. 5; Isai. xxxiii. 5; Jer. xxv. 30; Isai. lvii. 15.

The manner in which God dwells in heaven is so much superior to that wherein he dwells on earth, that heaven is said to be God's throne, and the earth his footstool; Isai. lxvi. 1. "Thus

saith the Lord, The heaevn is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; where is the house that ye build unto me, and where is the place of my rest."

The holy places on earth, where God is represented as dwelling, are called his footstool. Lam. ii. 1, "And remembered his footstool in the day of his anger;" 1 Chron. xxviii. 2, "As for me I had in mine heart to build an house of rest for the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and for the footstool of our God, and had made ready for the building;" Ps. cxxxii. 7, "We shall go into his tabernacle, we will worship at his footstool." God's sanctuary is called the place of his feet. Isai. lx. 13. "To beautify the place of my sanctuary, and to make the place of my feet glorious." The inferior manner in which God dwelt in the Jewish sanctuary, was expressed by this, that God placed his name there. Earthly holy places, which were called God's house, or the place of his habitation, were so in such a manner, and a manner so inferior to that in which heaven is God's house, that they are represented as only outworks, or gates of heaven. Gen. xxviii. 17. "This is none other but the house of God, this is the gate of heaven." Yea, though God is represented as dwelling in those earthly holy places, yet he was so far from dwelling in them as he does in heaven, that when he appeared in them from time to time, he is represented as then coming from heaven to them, as though heaven were his fixed abode, and not mount Sinai; and the tabernacle and the temple, places into which he would occasionally turn aside and appear. Thus God is said to have descended in a cloud, and appeared to Moses when he passed by him and proclaimed his name, though he had before that from time to time appeared there as in the mount of God, and though Moses had at that time been long conversing with God in the mount. Exod. xxxiv. 5. And so God descended from time to time on the tabernacle. Numb. xi. 25, and xii. 5. Heaven is always represented as the proper and fixed abode of God, and other dwelling places but as occasional abodes. When the wise man speaks of worshipping God in his house, he at the same time would have those that worship him there be sensible that he is in heaven, and not on the earth: Eccles. v. 1, 2. "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God.——Let not thy heart be hasty to utter any thing before God; for God is in heaven, and thou upon the earth."

So God, when he withdrew from the land of Israel, is spoken of as returning to heaven; which is called his place, as though the land of Israel were not his place, Hosea v. 15, "I will go and return to my place." And God is spoken of as being in heaven in the time of the captivity, as he is in the prophecy of Daniel,

Dan. iv. 37; Dan. v. 23; and in Daniel's vision, Dan. iv. 13. 23. 31.

And heaven is also in the New Testament every where represented as the place of God's abode. Christ tells us that it is *God's throne*, Matth. v. 34. This we are taught in the New Testament to look on as God's Temple, after all that was legal and ceremonial concerning holy times, and holy places ceased. Acts vii. 48, 49. "Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands, as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool, what house will ye build me saith the Lord, and where is the place of my rest?" This is the true Temple and the true holy of holies, as it is represented in the Epistle to the Hebrews. Heaven is the place whence Christ descended, and it is the place whither he ascended. It was the place whence the Holy Ghost descended on Christ, and whence the voice came, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; and is the place whence the Holy Ghost was poured out at Pentecost, and whatever is from God is said to be from heaven, Matth. xvi. 1; Mark viii. 11; Luke xi. 16; Matth. xxi. 25; Luke ix. 54; Luke xxi. 11; John iii. 27; John vi. 31; Acts ix. 3, and xi. 5, 9; Rom. i. 18; 1 Cor xv. 47; 1 Peter i. 12; Heb. xii, 25; Rev. iii. 12; and other places. The angels are spoken of as coming from heaven from time to time, in the New Testament; and visions of God are represented by heaven's being opened; and prayer and divine worship are enjoined under the New Testament to be directed to heaven. We are to pray to our Father which is in heaven, which appellation is very often given to God in the New Testament. So we are to lift up our eyes and hands to heaven in our prayers. And heaven is every where in the New Testament spoken of as the place of God and Christ, and the angels, and the place of blessedness; and all good whatever of a divine nature, is called heavenly; and heaven is always spoken of as the proper country of the saints, the appointed place of all that is holy and happy.

Whenever God comes out of heaven into this world, he is represented as bowing the heavens: intimating that heaven is so much the proper place of God's abode, that it is something very great and extraordinary for him to manifest himself as he is pleased to do in this world among his people, that heaven, the proper place of his abode, is, as it were, rent, or bowed, and brought down in part to the earth to make way for it, 2 Sam. xxii. 10; Ps. xviii. 9; Ps. cxliv. 5; Isai. lxiv. 1. God is called the God of heaven, the Lord of heaven, the King of heaven, Dan. v. 23; iv. 37; ii. 44.

Heaven is so much the proper place of God's abode, that, by a metonomy, heaven is put for God himself, 2 Chron. xxxii. 20.

" And for this cause, Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah, the son of Amoz, prayed, and cried to heaven;" Ps. lxxiii. 9. " They set their mouth against the heavens;" and when any thing is spoken of in scripture as being from heaven, the same is to be understood as to be from God; thus the Prodigal says, " I have sinned *against heaven*," i. e. *against God*, Luke xv. 21.

Heaven is a part of the universe which God in the first creation, and the disposition of things that was made in the beginning, appropriated to himself, to be that part of the universe that should be his residence, while other parts were destined to other uses. Ps. cxv. 15, 16. " You are blessed of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth. The heaven, even the heavens are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men." God having taken this part of the universe for his dwelling-place in the beginning of the creation, he will retain it as long as the creation lasts.

When man was in a state of innocency before the world was polluted and brought into the perfect state of confusion, God was in heaven: heaven was God's dwelling-place, for the angels fell from thence; we read that when they fell God cast them down from heaven, and therefore, when this polluted, confused state of the world is at an end, and elect men shall be perfectly restored from the fall to another state of innocency, and perfect happiness after the resurrection, heaven will also then be the place of God's abode.

This lower world in its beginning came from God in heaven. He dwelt in heaven when he made it, and brought it out of its chaos into its present form; as is evident, because we are told that when God did this, the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God, i. e. the angels, shouted for joy: without doubt the habitation of the angels was from the beginning that high and holy place where God dwells, and their habitation was heaven in the time of the creation, because those that fell were cast down from thence. But if the lower world in its beginning was from God in heaven, without doubt in its end it will return thither as he dwelt in heaven before, and when he made it and brought it out of its chaos into its present form, so he will dwell in heaven when and after it is destroyed and reduced to a chaos again.

Heaven is that throne where God sits in his dominion, not only over some particular parts of the universe, as the mercy seat in the temple, but it is the throne of his universal kingdom. Ps. ciii. 19. " The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all," i. e. over all his works, or all that he hath made; which appears by verse 22, " Bless the Lord all his works, in all places of his dominion." Because it is the throne in which God rules over the whole universe, therefore it is the up-

permost part of the universe as above all; and it is evident that the heaven where God dwells is far above those lower heavens; it is said to be far above all heavens. And as it is the throne of his universal kingdom, so it is the throne of his everlasting kingdom, as he here reigns by a dominion that is universal with respect to the extent of it. The psalmist in this same place is speaking of things that are the fruits of God's everlasting dominion, especially his everlasting mercy to his people, (which mercy will be especially manifested after the day of judgment,) as in the words immediately preceding in the two foregoing verses, "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him," &c. The word here translated *prepared*, also signifies *established*, having respect to its firmness, and durableness. It is fit, as God's kingdom is everlasting, so the throne of that kingdom should be everlasting, and never should be changed, for that which moves is ready to vanish away. The everlastingness of God's kingdom is signified by the same word in the original that in the place now mentioned is translated *prepared*. Ps. xciii. 2. "*Thy throne is established of old, thou art from everlasting*," together with the context.

If God should change the place of his abode, and his throne from heaven to some other part of the universe, then that which has hitherto been God's chief throne, and his metropolis, his royal city, must either be destroyed or put to a so much meaner use, and be deprived of so much of its glory as would be equivalent to a destruction; which is not a seemly thing for the chief city, palace, and throne of the Eternal King, whose royal throne never shall be destroyed. Ps. xlv. 6. "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever."

This heaven, that is so often spoken of as the place of God's proper and settled abode, is a *local heaven*, a particular place or part of the universe, and the highest, or outermost part of it, because it is said to be the heaven of heavens; it is the place where the body of Christ is ascended, which is said to be far above all heavens, and is called the third heaven.

Is it likely that God should change the place of his eternal abode, and remove, and come and dwell in another part of the universe; or that he should gather men and bring them home to himself, as to their great end and centre, whither all things should tend, and in which all should rest?

It is fit that an immutable being, and he who has an everlasting, and unchangeable dominion, should not move the place of his throne.

The apostle John, even when he is giving a description of the state of the church after the resurrection, represents the place of

God's abode as being then in heaven, for he says he saw the new Jerusalem descending from God out of heaven.

The dwelling place of the saints is said to be eternal in the heavens; 2 Cor. v. 1; "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

If any say that this *earth* will be *heaven* after the day of judgment, is it not as easy to say that, after the resurrection, *heaven* will be the *new earth*? is there any more force upon words one way than the other?

The natural images and representations of things seem to represent heaven to be the place of light, happiness, and glory; such as the serenity and brightness of the visible heavens of which I have spoken elsewhere.

It is an argument, that this globe we now dwell upon is not to be refined to be the place of God's everlasting abode, because it is a moveable globe, and must continue moving always, if the laws of nature are upheld. It being so small, it cannot remain and subsist distinct among the neighbouring parts of the universe without motion; but it is not seemly that God's eternal glorious abode, and fixed and everlasting throne, should be a moveable part of the universe.

As heaven will be everlastingly the place of God's chief, highest, and most glorious abode; so without doubt it will be the place of Christ's everlasting residence, and therefore the place whither he will return after the day of judgment. He who has had the honour and glory of dwelling in this glorious abode of God hitherto, will not have his honour diminished after he has completed all his work as God's officer, by then dwelling in a place far separated from God's dwelling-place. If he returned in triumph to heaven, entering into the royal city after his first victory in his terrible conflict under sufferings, much more shall he return thither after his more perfect and complete victory, when all his enemies shall be put under his feet after the day of judgment. And if Christ, after the day of judgment, returns to heaven to dwell, doubtless all his saints shall go there with him; he will invite them to come with him and inherit the kingdom prepared for them before the foundation of the world.

The place of both Christ and his church, their everlasting residence, will be heaven: when Christ comes forth at the day of judgment with the armies of heaven, the saints and angels attending him, it will be as it were on a white horse going forth to a glorious victory. And as the Roman generals after their victories returned in triumph to Rome, the metropolis of the em-

pire, delivering up their power to them that sent them forth; so will Christ return in triumph to heaven, all his armies following him, and shall there deliver up his delegated authority to the Father. As Christ returned to heaven after his first victory, after the resurrection of his natural body, so he will return thither again after his second victory, after the resurrection of his mystical body.

[745] *New heavens and new earth.* It is manifest that the world of the blessed, that is the new world, or the new heavens and earth, or the next world that is to succeed this as the habitation of the church, is heaven, is the same world that is now the habitation of the angels. For heaven, or the world of the angels, is called the world that is to come. Eph. i. 20, 21, 22. "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under his feet." Heaven, the habitation of principalities and powers, is that which is here called *the world to come*, as being the world that was to succeed this, as the habitation of the church. It cannot be understood in any other sense, or merely that Christ was to be at the head of things in the new world when it did exist; but it speaks of what is already done and was done at Christ's ascension, a past effect of God's mighty power, *according to the working of the exceeding greatness of his power which he wrought in Christ Jesus when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.*

[775] *Happiness of separate saints.* The proper time of Christ's reward is not till after the end of the world, for he will not have finished the work of Mediator till then, but yet he has glorious rewards in heaven before. The proper time of the angels' reward is not till the end of the world, and their work of attending on, and ministering to, Christ in his humbled militant state, both in himself and members, or body mystical, is not finished till then, but yet they are confirmed before, and have an exceeding reward before. The proper time of the saints' reward is not in this world, nor is their work, their hard labour, trial, and sufferings, finished till death; but yet they are confirmed as soon as they believe, and have an earnest of their future inheritance the first fruits of the Spirit now. And so, though the proper time of judgment and reward of all elect creatures, is not till the end of the world; yet the saints have glorious rewards in heaven immediately after death.

[889] *Heaven*—the eternal abode of the church. The house not made with hands is eternal in the heavens; but, if the saints' abode in heaven be temporary as well as their abode on earth, it would not be said so; their house there would be but a *tabernacle* as well as here. By the *house eternal in the heavens*, it is evident there is some respect had to the resurrection body, which proves that the place of the abode of the saints after the resurrection will be in heaven, as well as before.

If the saints were only to stay in heaven till the resurrection, then they would be pilgrims and strangers in heaven, as well as on earth, and the country that the saints of old declared plainly that they sought, though they were in possession of the earthly Canaan, will be but a temporary Canaan, as well as the earth; and in some respects more so, because the earth is to be their eternal abode, (though changed,) and not heaven.

We are directed to lay up treasure in heaven, as in a safe place, where it will be subject to no change or remove. The names of the saints are written or enrolled in heaven, and they have their citizenship in heaven, as being their proper fixed abode where they belong, and where they are to be settled. The inheritance, incorruptible, is reserved in heaven for the saints, and they are kept by the power of God to this salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time, or at the day of judgment. So that the inheritance in heaven is the saints' proper, incorruptible, and everlasting inheritance; and the saints shall be so far from changing the place of their abode in heaven for an abode on a renewed earth at the day of judgment, that this is the proper time of the church's being translated to this incorruptible inheritance in heaven, and the whole army of Israel's passing Jordan to that inheritance; for that is the last time wherein this salvation shall be revealed.

The Lord from heaven does not come to give his elect the country of the earthly Adam only renewed to the paradisaical state wherein the earthly Adam enjoyed it; Col. i. 5. "For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." The proper time of the reward of the saints is after the resurrection, as is evident by Luke xiv. 14, "But thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just;" and the proper place of that reward is heaven, as is evident by Matth. v. 12, "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven;" Heb. x. 34, "Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance;" and the time, when the apostle encourages them that they shall receive this enduring substance in heaven, is when Christ comes to judgment, as is evident by the three following verses.

Christ is entered into the holiest of all, and is set down for ever on the right hand of God in heaven, and therefore will not eternally leave heaven to dwell in this lower world in a renewed state.

Christ ascended into heaven as the forerunner of the church; and therefore the whole church shall enter there; even that part that shall be found alive at the day of judgment. Christ entered into heaven with his risen and glorified body, as an earnest of the same resurrection and ascension to the bodies of the saints; therefore, when the bodies of the saints shall rise, they shall also ascend into heaven. See No. 743. 1184.

[917] *Saints in heaven acquainted with what is done on earth.* That the blessed inhabitants of heaven are very much occupied in observing gospel wonders done on earth, and that their blessedness in seeing God consists very much in beholding his glory as displayed in those wonders, is manifest not only by the book of Revelation, but many other passages of scripture; as Ps. lxxxix., which treats of these wonders; ver. 5, "And the heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord; thy faithfulness also in the congregation of the saints;" and Ps. xix. 1, 2, considering the subject of the Psalm, see Ps. cxlix. 5, to the end, with Notes on verses 5 and 9. See Matth. xix. 29. Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 29.

[952] *New heavens and new earth—Consummation of all things—Progress of the work of redemption.* Heaven shall be changed and exalted to higher glory at the end of the world. The creation consists of two parts, upper and lower. This we read of the worlds in the plural number that were made in the creation, Heb. i. 2, which the apostle in the next chapter distinguishes into two, viz. this world, and the world to come, ver. 5, as also Eph. i. 21. The upper world is said to be the world to come, both because it is future to us in this world, and also because to the whole elect church it is to succeed this world when this is destroyed, and also on another account, that we will observe by and by. The one of these worlds God hath made for his own Son, and for his attendants, and ministers, the angels; and the other for man. Ps. clv. 16. "The heaven, even the heavens, are the Lord's, but the earth hath he given to the children of men." According to the two different kinds of intelligent creatures that God hath made, angels and men, there are two worlds. The one is corruptible, but the other incorruptible; the one is that which can be shaken, the other that which cannot be shaken, but shall remain to all eternity. But yet both in their own nature are mutable, and that heaven is incorruptible, is by the divine will and grace, and not necessarily from the nature of heaven. If the angelic

nature, the highest and most excellent part of heaven, is corruptible, or liable to be shaken and destroyed, as appears by the event; doubtless the place, what is inanimate in heaven, is in its own nature capable of destruction. Heaven is not unalterable in its own nature, so but that it may be exalted. That part of the universe that is capable of ruin is not so unalterable in its own nature, but that it may be brought to an higher excellency; but the highest heavens in their own nature are capable of ruin in the highest and most excellent part of it, in the head of all that part of the creation, and so of the whole creation, viz. Lucifer.

God only is incorruptible in his own nature. The one of these worlds is to fall and be ruined, and is to be the eternal seat of those creatures that fall and are ruined; the other is to stand, and to be exalted and brought to higher excellency, perfection, and glory, and is to be the seat of those creatures that stand and are brought to higher excellency. As all the intelligent creatures that God hath made the inhabitants of the universe, all the spiritual world, (which is the chief part of the universe, and *instar totius,)* is mutable and is to be changed, either by suffering ruin, or by being exalted to a vastly higher perfection; so is the whole universe itself (the habitation, the inferior and inanimate part of the universe,) all of it mutable, and all to be changed, either by suffering ruin, or being gloriously exalted in excellency. This universal change shall be at the end of the world, or immediately after the day of judgment. Then shall be the change on the inhabitants: some shall perish, and others shall be exalted to an immensely higher degree of excellency and glory. And so shall it then be with the two worlds: this lower world, that is to be the place of those that perish, shall be destroyed by fire; the upper world, that is to be the seat of the elect, shall be exalted exceedingly in its nature. And this is the new creation, so far as that respects the external and inanimate universe. This will be the external new heavens, and new earth; as there are two spiritual worlds, the elect and the reprobate, so there are two natural worlds, that are to be the everlasting external seats or places of those spiritual worlds. And as it is to be with those spiritual worlds themselves, that one will be destroyed as in a spiritual furnace of fire, and the other will be exalted to a state of excellency and glory, vastly greater than their original excellency; as even the angels, the original inhabitants of heaven will be; so there is no reason to think but that it will be likewise with the two external worlds, which they have relation to.

When God created this lower world, he made different orders or ranks of creatures, of which the lower creation is constituted, of which man is the most noble and excellent; and so when God made the upper world, he made different parts, of which the an-

gelical nature is the most noble and exalted, and those parts which constitute the *habitation* are inferior. Surely, therefore, the angels, the highest part of the upper creation, will be changed and exceedingly exalted in the glory in which they shine, (as doubtless they will be in some proportion to the great and vast alteration that will be made in the glory of the saints, seeing the day of judgment is the proper time of the reward of the angels as well as saints.) There is no reason to think that the inferior parts will not also be proportionally exalted.

God built heaven chiefly for an habitation for Christ, his dear Son, and the angels themselves are made for him, and are as it were only parts of his house, or habitation; as it is said of the church in Heb. iii. 6. All that is in heaven is an habitation for God's beloved Son, the angels are only the more noble and excellent parts of the structure, the chief ornaments of the building. The inanimate parts of heaven are to the angels an habitation; but the intelligent parts of it are to Christ an habitation. As they are called his *chariots*, the seat on which he rides, so they are his *throne*, the seat on which he reigns. As the throne is the noblest part of the palace, and as God built the whole of the upper world to be an habitation for his dear Son; so when the time comes that God shall reward his Son for his perfect and great obedience, and finishing his great work appointed him to do, when the work he was appointed to in his office is all finished at the end of the world, and the time comes for him to receive his full reward, to be glorified with his complete and highest glory in the head and all his members, and all enter into heaven together at Christ's last and greatest ascension thither; the house shall be garnished and beautified exceedingly, to make it fit for his reception in this his highest glory, as it shall be so with the glorious angels who are his chariot, in which he shall ascend, (they shall ascend in far greater glory than they descended, because they shall have received the glory that is their reward,) and who will be his throne when he is come thither, and the chief and most noble parts of the building. I say as they will be as it were made new, appearing in new glory, so will it be with all the inferior parts of the habitation. The house shall be garnished to prepare it for the glorious bridegroom, who shall enter into it with his blessed bride in her complete and perfect beauty, when they shall enter into heaven to celebrate the solemnity, and to partake of the glorious entertainments and joys of an eternal wedding; as when king Ahasuerus made a great feast, wherein he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom and the honour of his excellent majesty; and, to show the beauty of his queen, the palace was exceedingly adorned on that occasion. Eph. i. 6.

There is nothing in the scripture, that in the least intimates the external heaven or paradise to be unchangeable, and not capable

of being perfected and exalted to higher glory. There is nothing so but the divine nature itself; and it is too much honour to any created thing to suppose it to be so perfect, that no occasion whatsoever, even the reward of the infinite merits of the infinitely beloved Son of God himself, is occasion great enough for allowing of it, or that shall render it fit and proper, that it be yet further adorned. The only heaven that is unalterable, is the state of God's own infinite and unchangeable glory; the heaven which God dwelt in from all eternity, which is absolutely of infinite height and infinite glory, and which might metaphorically be represented as the heaven that was the eternal abode of the blessed Trinity, and of the happiness and glory they have one in another; which is an heaven that is uncreated, and the heaven from whence God infinitely stoops to behold the things done in the created paradise; and of which, that which we conceive of as the infinite and unchangeable expanse of Space, that is above and beyond the whole universe, and encompasses the whole, is the shadow. This is what is meant, Isai. lvii. 15. (See Notes in loc.)

It is true the things of the highest heavens are things that cannot be shaken, but shall remain through divine grace. Heaven is God's throne, and his throne is established for ever, and therefore shall be for ever and ever, and the saints shall receive a kingdom that cannot be moved. Heb. xii. 28. Heaven is a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God; it is an house not made with hands, and so eternal. This is an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. What is reserved in heaven is represented in scripture as far above the reach of all the changes of time that should injure it, and the doors of the palace are everlasting doors. Ps. xxiv. But none of these things argue heaven to be in any other respect unchangeable, than only as being above all changes that might destroy it, or mar it, or in any respect fade its glory, or bring into any danger of those things. Heaven is no otherwise out of the reach of change than the precious jewels and treasures that are there kept are so, as the angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, and the man Christ Jesus, the most precious and brightest jewel that God has made, the first born of every creature, the crown and glory of heaven and men, the sun of that world of light; but yet all these are susceptive of change in this respect, that they will be exalted to vastly higher glory. Christ's glory after the day of judgment will be greater than before, as the devil that has managed the war against him shall then be punished for all the mischief that he has done. So Christ, God's General, the Captain that he hath sent forth in this great war against his enemies, when he shall have fully conquered and put down all authority and power, having come forth out of heaven to that end with all his hosts, and has

so gloriously finished all the work that his Father gave him a commission for, shall be exceedingly rewarded and glorified. When he shall return with the victory in every respect perfect, he shall enter the city with great triumph to receive a great reward from the Supreme authority of the city. If Christ God Man, the King of heaven, and its most bright and precious jewel, the first born of every creature, the head and crown, ornament and glory of heaven, and its bright and only luminary, the Sun of heaven, whose glory and sweetness is the fullness, and glory, and happiness of all that world: who is the Alpha and Omega of all that is there, and the sum of all; I say, if he shall be exalted in glory, why not the place, the external habitation that is the lowest part of that world? The habitation has not the honour of being immutable and immoveable in a higher sense than this King and end and glory of heaven himself is. The man Christ Jesus becomes immortal and eternal at his Resurrection, but yet that was no impediment in the way of his being, as it were, further glorified, as it were, in infinitely higher degrees, as in his first and second ascension. That the highest heavens pass under such a change at the end of the world, is no argument that it is with that as it is with the visible heavens that wax old as a garment; any more than the change on the body of Christ at his ascension, or on the bodies of Enoch and Elias, and on the bodies of those that arose with Christ, is an argument of the like waxing old.

If the highest heaven might be as it were bowed and rent, (though it be the throne of God,) that the eternal Son of God might come down on the earth, to be the subject of his humiliation; doubtless it is as capable of being adorned and made higher and higher on occasion of his glorification.

The external Heavens, and the Human Nature of Christ, are the *external House* and *Temple* of God in different senses; but the Human Nature, or Body, of Christ, including both the head and the members,—including his human nature with his church,—is the house and temple of God in the highest sense. This is immensely the most noble temple of God. But if this, which is the Palace of God in so much the highest sense, will pass under a glorious change; why should not the external house, which is the temple of God in a much inferior sense, and which indeed is to be but an house for this house, pass under a glorious change? If the Inner temple, the highest and most holy part of the temple, shall be so much exalted, why may we not suppose that the External temple, the outer courts, or the outermost curtains of the tabernacle be changed and made proportionally more beautiful?

Christ Mystical, or Christ and his Church, and the External Heaven, are the city of God, or the new Jerusalem, in different senses; but the former in vastly the highest and noblest manner.

But if the city of God, or the new Jerusalem, that which is called so in the highest sense, shall be so exalted and adorned with new glory at the head of the universe; why not that external new Jerusalem, that is as much inferior to the other as the body is to the soul? If the soul shall be glorified and made better, why not the body: if the body, why not the garment: if the inhabitants, why not the house?

The body of Christ is the dwelling-place of his soul; and therefore when God the Father glorified the soul of Christ, he also glorified his body, because he judged it meet that the alteration in the house should be answerable to the alteration in the inhabitant. And so, for the same reason, the bodies of the saints shall be glorified as well as their souls; and there is just the same reason why heaven, the house of Christ, and the house of his saints; or in one word, the house of Christ Mystical; should be exalted to higher glory at the same time that Christ Mystical himself, the inhabitant, is exalted to higher glory.

The church is Christ's Temple: Christ is spoken of as *dwelling in* the saints. This temple of Christ, the new Jerusalem, shall, at the end of the world, when Christ comes to receive his full reward, be exceedingly adorned, to fit it for Christ's *indwelling*; as we see by Rev. xxi. 2. And why shall not the other temple of Christ, that which is so in an inferior sense, be proportionally adorned at the same time? It is not rational to suppose that the whole tabernacle shall be *proportionally* adorned and beautified: the outer curtains proportionally with the inward curtains of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen?

The infinitely glorious and beloved Son of God's shedding his blood, and enduring those extreme sufferings in obedience to his Father's will, was a thing great enough to obtain this, even that the very heaven of heavens should be made new, with new glory for him; it was great enough to lay the foundation for an universal refreshing, renewing or new creation of all elect things, that all things both spiritual and external should be immensely exalted in perfection, beauty, and glory.

It seems impossible that it should be otherwise than that all heaven should put on new glory at the same time that Christ put on new glory; all must be allowed proportion, for Christ is the glory of heaven, the beauty and ornament, the life and soul of all; and there is no glory there, but only the reflection of his glory, and the emanation of his brightness and life, and the diffusion of his sweetness. Every manner of beauty or excellency there, is immediately dependent on him: there is no shining or lustre, no fineness or purity, no vivacity or pleasantness, in any thing there, but it is in such a manner dependent on him, as to appear to be *immediately*, every moment, *from him*, as a kind of diffusion of his

glory and sweetness on every thing, and into and through every thing; so that the most inward nature of every thing there receives all excellency, and all purity and preciousness, and sweetness from him immediately. In heaven, Christ appears and acts most visibly and sensibly as the Creator, and Life, and Soul, and Fountain of all being and perfection, and He of whom, and through whom all things are, and by whom all immediately consist. Thus the glory of the latter house will in every respect be greater than the glory of the former house, because Jehovah, the angel of the covenant, shall come into his temple, and fill the house with his glory. Christ's appearing in glory will be that which will glorify the bodies of his saints, as though it was an immediate visible communication of his glory and life to them, as from the head to the members. Nothing but his presence in so great glory effects the thing, and so will it be with respect to every thing else that is external in heaven.

Thus as the face of the earth rejoices at the return of the sun in the spring, and there is a great alteration in it, it puts on new beautiful garments of joy, and gladness, and welcomes the sun; and its renewed beauty is from the sun, from his diffused glory, and sweet vivifying influence, in which all the face of the earth rejoices; so it will be in heaven when Christ returns thither in his highest glory after the day of judgment, all heaven will rejoice, and put on new life, new beauty, and glory, to welcome him thither.

[1122] *Heaven perfected.* The external heaven surrounds Christ, not merely as a house surrounds an inhabitant, or as a palace surrounds a prince; but rather as plants and flowers are before the sun, that have their life and beauty and being from that luminary; or as the sun may be encompassed round with reflections of his brightness, as the cloud of glory in mount Sinai surrounded Christ there.

[1126] *Heaven perfected, after the day of judgment.* Solomon's temple was a great type of heaven; and the prophet Haggai, foretells that the glory of the latter temple shall be greater than that of the former, because that the Messiah, "the desire of all nations," should come into it; Hag. ii. 6, 7, 8. "For thus saith the Lord of hosts, Yet once, it is a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and *the Desire of all nations* shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of hosts. The glory of the latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of hosts. And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts." I suppose that what was here foretold concerning that typical temple was fulfilled much more properly

and amply concerning heaven itself, when the Messiah entered into it at his first ascension, and will be fulfilled to a much more glorious degree still at his second ascension, at Christ's entrance into that heavenly temple, with his glorified and complete mystical body, as well as his natural body, after God has in a literal manner shaken the heavens and the earth, the sea, and the dry land, and shaken all nations.

The beautifying and adorning the temple of Jerusalem so exceedingly be a little before Christ came into it, seems to be some shadow of this ; and I believe was intended as a type of it ; though not parallel in every circumstance, as the beautifying of it not being at the very instant of Christ's first entering into the temple, and some other circumstances. This seems also to be typified by the immensely more glorious abode that the ark had in Solomon's time than that which it had in David's time. The carrying up of the ark into mount Zion in David's time, was a type of Christ's first ascension into heaven, as is evident from scripture, and the carrying of it up into mount Moriah, into Solomon's glorious temple, is a type of his second more glorious ascension into a more glorious abode at the end of the world. David's militant reign till all the enemies of Israel were subdued under them, was a type of Christ's present reign in heaven, over his church till the resurrection, which is a militant reign ; for till the end of the world he goes on fighting, and will continue so to do till all enemies are made his footstool. As yet we see not all things put under him, and the last enemy that shall be conquered is death, which shall be at the end of the world. Solomon's glorious reign in perfect peace and tranquillity with all subdued under him, and settled in subjection to him, is a type of the reign of Christ after the end of the world : all enemies shall be subdued ; and the place of the ark in his reign, in this glorious and most magnificent temple, was a type of the abode of Christ in heaven, in its advanced glory, at the consummation of all things. It is the same heaven, only sublimated and exalted to exceeding greater glory ; which is typified by the mountain of the temple, being called by the same name after the ark was removed into it, that the place of its former abode was called by, viz. *mount Zion ;* so that the ark is represented as never changing its place from mount Zion ; and when it was carried into mount Zion, God said of it, " This is my rest for ever, here will I dwell ; for I have desired it." Ps. cxxxii. 13, 14.

There is a place somewhere in the universe, (perhaps in the central parts of the earth,) that is called Hell ; but hell will be made immensely more terrible after the day of judgment, when instead of that fire in the centre of the earth, all the visible universe shall be turned into a great furnace : and probably heaven will be

made as much more glorious, after the day of judgment, as hell will be made more terrible.

Thus the External new Jerusalem, or the glorious and eternal abode of the church of God; (which cannot be excluded from the description in the two last chapters in Revelations, because there is in the description, often a distinction made between the *city* and the *saints* that are the *inhabitants;)* I say, Thus the external new Jerusalem will come down from God out of heaven; i. e. Heaven, in this new creation of it, shall come down from *the infinitely High and Uncreated Heaven*, in which God had dwelt from all eternity, from which God stoops and humbles himself to behold the things that are in heaven.

Thus that will be fulfilled that is proclaimed in Rev. xxi. 5, "And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new." The whole creation, external and spiritual, shall be altered, and new formed; and thus the New creation will be parallel with the First creation that Moses gives us an account of, to which it is spoken of as parallel in scripture; and all *the Elect Creation*, which is composed of all elect things in heaven and in earth, shall be gotten together in Christ, and all made new, both spiritual and external; all that appertains to the elect, not only elect spirits, but their external habitations: their bodies, that are the microcosm or their particular habitations; and the microcosm, that is, the general habitation. There shall be collected all that is *Elect* in heaven or earth, being all perfectly purified by fire, and not mixed with the reprobate part of the world, and all shall be made new, and so is justly called "the New Heaven and New Earth." There will be new angels and new men, new bodies and new spirits: things that are originally of the earth made new, and things originally of heaven also made new. Though the place of the church of Christ (for whose sake chiefly all heaven and earth is made) be different from what it was before: she dwells in another place, instead of that heaven and earth that was her habitation before: yet it is called by the same *name*, but only *new*, as the ark when it moved from *Zion* to mount *Moriah*, carried the *name* with it, only it was a *New* Zion.

When God has obtained his end of the Universe that he created in the beginning, when all things are brought to issue into their end at the Consummation of all things, and God in the final event appears to be the OMEGA, as he was the ALPHA; then God will show his mighty power a second time towards the whole: towards the Reprobate part of the creation, in terribly destroying it; and towards the Elect part, in bringing it to its highest perfection. The Elect creatures, who are the eye and mouth of the creation, who are made to behold God's works, and to give him the glory of them, did not behold the first crea-

tion. The angels did not behold the first creation of heaven, that most glorious part of the creation, nor did they see the creation of themselves; and men beheld no part of God's work in producing the creation; but the time will come when God will make all things new by a new creation, wherein his power towards the whole will be much more displayed than in the first creation. When God shall effect this creation, men and angels shall see God perform it, they shall see God produce the New heaven and New earth by his mighty power. Men, who saw the creation of nothing in the first creation, shall see the creation of all, and even their own new creation; and angels shall see the creation of heaven and of themselves: all shall see that creation that shall be a work so much more wonderful, and so much greater than the former, that the former shall not be mentioned, nor come into mind.

Conflagration. Many suppose the fire of the conflagration will be a pyrifying fire, by which the heavens and the earth will be refined in order to their standing forth in new perfection and beauty. This is very true, yet not in the manner in which many reem to understand. It will indeed be the fire by which the whole universe shall be purified, i. e. by which it shall be purged from its reprobate parts; all the filthiness of the whole universe shall be gathered into it, there to be consumed. The reprobate part of heaven was removed out of it to be cast into this fire; the filthiness that once was there is consumed here, and so is all that is reprobate, and filthy in the earth. It is a purifying fire, as it is the fire of God's justice and holiness; but the justice and holiness of God shall perfectly purify heaven and earth, and purge all the elect creation from all manner of defilement or mixture of that which is reprobate; whereby it will be fitted to be exalted to its highest beauty and glory. And not only so, but such a wonderful and terrible display of the holiness and justice of God, will be a great means of further sanctifying all the elect universe, setting them at a vastly greater distance from sin against this Holy God, and a means of vastly exalting the purity and sanctity of their minds.

Many have supposed that the place of the residence of the saints, after the day of judgment, would be different from what it is before; that the *Paradise* in which the departed souls of saints are now, is different from the *Heaven* into which they shall be admitted after the day of judgment; and that Paradise is only a place of rest, in which the saints are reserved till the judgment, when they shall be admitted into heaven. Here is a mixture of truth with error. It is true that the habitation of the saints, after the day of judgment, will be new and different, exceeding different, from what it was before, but not in that manner that has been supposed:

not that the *place* or *situation* will be different, there is no need of that; but the *habitation* will be new created, and shall appear with quite new and transcendently more excellent glory.

It may be objected against what has been here supposed, that Christ, at the day of judgment, will invite his saints to "inherit the kingdom *prepared for them from the foundation of the world*;" as though it were the *same* heaven, that was made and prepared for them at the first creation, which they were now going to inherit.

Answer. It is the same house then built, not taken down, never shaken or removed, but only made more glorious; as they are the same angels of heaven that were made for the saints, from the foundation of the world, though they shall be so much more glorified that they will be as it were new creatures. As it will be with the *angels* of heaven, who are the principal part of the kingdom spoken of, so it will be with the *external habitation:* it was prepared for them at the foundation of the world—the foundation of it was laid then, and has been preparing *from* the foundation of the world, from that time that the foundation of the world was laid, it has been preparing ever since, in all that has been done to it, and in it, and about it. And not only the kingdom is prepared from the foundation of the world in creating *heaven*, and in what has been done *there* from that time; but the creation of the *whole universe* was made to prepare a kingdom for them, to lay a foundation for their kingdom and dominion, and *all that has been done in providence*, ever since, has been to prepare a kingdom for them. And these words of Christ are a good argument, that the *work of redemption is the end and sum of all God's works.* It was the end of the creation of the whole universe, and of all God's works of providence in it.

Quest. By whom and at what time will this glorious work of God, in making the highest heavens *new*, be accomplished? will it be done by God the Father in the absence of his Son, while he is here in this lower world taken up in the concerns of the last judgment, to garnish heaven or prepare it for his Son with his blessed bride against their coming? or will it be accomplished by the Son at his return into heaven with his church?

Answer. Not by the former, but by the latter; for the following reasons.

1. All *communicated* glory to the creature must be by the Son of God, who is the brightness or shining forth of his Father's glory: and therefore when the Eternal World comes to receive its greatest brightness and glory, it will doubtless be by him, and it will be by him as God man; for all that God doth by Christ, or the medium of communication between himself and the creature since Christ became God man, or at least since as God man he has been glorified and enthroned as Lord of the universe; he doth by Christ

as God man, in whom it hath pleased the Father that all fullness should dwell, and that in all things he should have the pre-eminence. As *he* glorifies the angels and saints who are the inhabitants, so doubtless it will be he who will glorify the habitation.

2. The old creation was by him, the highest heavens were created by him; for without him was not any thing made that was made; it was said concerning him, "Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thine hand," Heb. i. 10; and not only the visible but the invisible heavens were created by him; for he is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature, and the beginning of the creation of God; for by him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him, and he is before all things, and by him all things consist. So likewise the New Creation will be by him, for by him God makes the worlds; not only the visible but invisible world, not only the present world, but the world to come, that new world, the new heavens and new earth; for God hath given him a name above every name that is named, not only in this world but in that which is to come, Eph. i. 21. By the world to come in that place, the apostle seems to mean the new world that shall follow when the age of this shall be at an end, for the word is Αιων, *Age: this age*, and *that which is to come;* and unto Christ hath God put in subjection the world to come. If God committed to him the creation of the old world, much more would he commit to him the creation of the new, for it his business to renew all things. The creation of the new heavens and the new earth is by the work of Redemption, which is his work; and it is a work that he works out as God man, and therefore as God man he will make the heavens new. All new things are by Christ: the new creature, the new name, the new covenant, the new song, the new Jerusalem, and the new heavens and new earth, are all by Christ, God man.

3. The destroying the lower world, the reprobate part of the creation, is committed to him; and therefore much more will the glorifying of the elect part of it be his work, for this is his most proper business; the other is his business more indirectly, and in subordination to this.

4. The creation is certainly by him, as to the principal parts of it, viz. the glorifying the saints and angels. He shall build the inner temple, and doubtless therefore, he will build the outer temple. The glorifying of that, which is his temple and city in the highest sense, is committed to him; and therefore, doubtless, the glorifying of that which is the temple and city in an inferior sense will be committed to him.

5. If Christ as God man shall be the author of this work, he will doubtless be so *visibly;* for the work is committed to him for his honour. It is an honour that the Father commits to him in reward of what he has done and suffered; it shall therefore be visibly done by Christ, as God man, and therefore will not be effected in his absence here in this lower world; but he shall be present when it is done, and shall visibly put forth his power and communicate his influence and glory in order to it.

6. If this work were wrought while Christ is here in this lower world judging the world, then this new creation would not be seen by men and angels, which is not to be supposed.

7. If this work be wrought in Christ's absence, then that world will not be glorified by the presence of the Sun of Righteousness, as the face of the earth is renewed and glorified by the return of the sun in the spring.

The Lamb is the light, and glory, and sun of the new Jerusalem, and therefore the new brightness and life, vigour, bloom, and beauty, and fragrancy, and joy, of this world will be from him and from his presence.

After the curse is executed on the universe of the ungodly, and all the angels and saints have beheld the dreadful execution; then Christ, with all his elect church, now perfect, shall ascend to heaven, and Christ shall come and present his church, now perfectly redeemed, to the Father, saying, "Here am I, and the children whom thou hast given me;" and having thus finished all the work that the Father had given him to do, he shall deliver up the kingdom to the Father. Then shall the Father, with infinite manifestations of endearment and delight, testify his acceptance of Christ, and of his Church thus presented to him, his infinite acquiescence in what his Son has done, and his complacency in him, and in his Church; and in reward shall now give them the joy of their eternal marriage-feast, and he himself will dress his Son in his wedding robes. The human nature of Christ, or Christ as God man, shall be the subject of a new glorification then, when he shall be the subject of those smiles of the Father, and those infinitely sweet manifestations of his acceptance and complacency, when he shall present his redeemed church, and deliver up the kingdom; and from the manifestations of complacency, the Son shall be changed into the same image of complacency and love, and shall put on that divine glory, the glory of the infinitely sweet divine love, grace, gentleness, and joy, and shall shine with this special light far more brightly than ever he did before, shall be clothed with those sweet robes in a far more glorious manner than ever before: then shall that be fulfilled in the highest degree; Ps. xxi. 6; "For thou hast made him most blessed for ever; thou hast made him exceeding glad, with thy

countenance;" and also the foregoing verses. Thus God the Father will give the Son his heart's desire, as it is said in the 2d verse of that psalm; his heart's desire was, that he might express his infinite love to his elect church, fully and freely; to this end God the Father will now crown him with a crown of love and array him in the brightest robes of love and grace, as his wedding garments, as the robe in which he should embrace his redeemed church, now brought home to her everlasting rest, in the house of her spiritual husband. As before he came into this accursed world in the glory of the Father, and God the Father arrayed him with his own glory, chiefly of his majesty, power, justice, omnipotence, and holiness, attributes that are terrible to God's enemies, because his errand into this reprobate part of the universe was to destroy it; so now he is returned and entered into the elect and blessed world, to receive the joy that was set before him with his church. Now he shall more especially have conferred on him the glory of his Father, in his gentle and sweet attributes, shining forth in the infinitely bright robes of his love, and grace, and holiness, his sweet ravishing beauty and delight, that he may bless and glorify that elect world with the beams of this light. The Son being thus glorified with infinite sweetness, by the light of the countenance of the Father, the glory will be communicated from him to his church, and she shall be transformed into his image by beholding him, and by the light of his glory and love, shining and smiling upon her. And at that time will be the transformation of all heaven, and it will become a new heaven; the beams of the Son's new glory of grace and love shall advance that whole world to new glory and sweetness. Thus Christ and his saints shall both receive their consummate felicity and full reward, and shall begin that eternal feast of love, and the eternal joys of that marriage supper of the Lamb. The saints shall not receive their full happiness till then; though they shall be glorified on earth when they shall be raised and changed at the first sight of their glorious Redeemer coming in the clouds, and shall be further glorified when they shall be made to sit with Christ on his throne of judgment; yet Christ speaks of their greatest happiness as then future, when he says, at the close of the judgment, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," &c. Now they shall inherit it; now they shall be put in possession of it.

Thus, though the new glory of heaven shall be, as it were, from the communicated influence and glory of the Sun of Righteousness returning to heaven from the judgment; yet it will not be at once, as soon as the beams of the returning Jesus shine on that world, but Christ, with all his saints and angels, shall first enter into the world, and they shall have opportunity to see its glory in its former

state; and then the presentation shall be made to the Father, and his acceptance manifested, and the purchased glory then given by his hands; so that the saints and angels shall have opportunity fully to see this work of the New Creation: first fully beholding the world before its renovation, and then seeing the change as it is, with the destruction of the reprobate world. That world, as it were, sinks of itself, flies away, and breaks in pieces, by beholding the manifestation of his awful majesty and wrath. The shining forth of the infinitely pure and powerful holiness, justice, and wrath, does, as it were, of itself, set all on fire; yet this destruction will not actually be at Chirst's first appearing in terrible majesty in the lower world, but at the greatest manifestation of it when he pronounces the curse on the ungodly.

How immensely will it heighten, in the eyes of the saints, the value of that love and gentleness with which they now shall see Christ clothed, that they just before have seen such great manifestations of his infinite majesty, and the terribleness of his wrath! And how will it heighten their admiration and joy in his love, when Christ himself, that glorious King, shall resign up the kingdom to the Father! Though he shall receive now his reward, and new glory from the Father, it will not be to act henceforward as the Supreme Head of Dominion, to whom the government of the world is left, but rather as an head or grand medium of enjoyment of the Father. Christ himself shall be admitted to a higher enjoyment of the Father than ever he was admitted to before; and in Christ, the saints shall enjoy the Father. The Son himself, as God man, shall now be subject to the Father. After the saints have seen him in infinite majesty in the judgment wherein his glorious and divine dignity appeared, and now come to see him in his ineffable mildness and love; they shall also see his transcendent humility in his adoration of the Father. And what a sense will this give them of the honour of the Father, to behold Jesus Christ, God man, a person of such dignity as they saw in the judgment, thus humbly adoring the Father! And how will this example influence their adoration of God, and keep up their reverence in that infinite nearness and freedom to which they are admitted; as the sight they have had of the terrible majesty of Christ in the judgment will keep up their reverence towards him in the midst of their most intimate communion with him, and while they dwell, as it were, in his arms, and on his lips! See concerning the new occasion of glory to the highest heavens at Christ's first ascension, Note on these words, John xiv. 2, "I go to prepare a place for you."

[934] *Happiness of Heaven.* God doubtless will entertain his saints according to the state of the King of heaven, when he comes to entertain them at the feast that he has provided with such

great contrivance and wonderful amazing exercises of infinite and mysterious wisdom, showing the bottomless depths, and infinite riches of his wisdom, and with such great and mighty ado, and innumerable and wonderful exercises of his power; having, in order to provide this feast, created heaven and earth, and done all in all ages, bringing such great revolutions in such an amazing wonderful series, and besides that having come down himself from his infinite height and become man, and also provided the feast at such infinite expence as that of his own blood. We read of Ahasuerus, a great king, when he made a feast unto all his princes and servants, he showed the riches of his glorious kingdom, and the power of his excellent majesty, and gave drink in vessels of gold, and royal wine in abundance, according to the state of the king, Esth. i. So doubtless the happiness of the saints in heaven shall be so great, that the very majesty of God shall be exceedingly shown in the greatness, and magnificence, and fullness of their enjoyments and delights.

[1059] That the *happiness* of the *saints* in *heaven* consists much in beholding the displays of God's mercy towards his church on earth, may be strongly argued from those texts that speak of the just and the meek inheriting the earth, and their having in the present time much more given of this world, houses, and lands, &c., than they parted with in the suffering state of the church; from Christ's comforting his disciples, when about to leave them, that they should weep and lament, and the world rejoice, yet their sorrow should be turned into joy, as a woman has sorrow in her travail, but much more than joy enough to balance it when she is delivered; from its being promised to the good man, Ps. cxxviii., that he should see the prosperity of Jerusalem, and peace in Israel; from the manner in which the promises of the future prosperity of the church were made of old to the church then in being; and from the manner in which the saints received them as all their salvation, and all their desire, and are said to hope and wait for the fulfilment from time to time.

[1061] *Happiness of heaven* consisting much in beholding God's works towards his church on earth. God says to David, 2 Sam. vii. "Thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever BEFORE THEE. Thy throne shall be established for ever." And a promise is made in the context concerning Solomon, that must be understood in the same sense; ver. 12, 13, "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

This promise concerning his kingdom and the kingdom of his Son, its being established for ever after he was dead, is what David takes principal notice of, and is most affected with, as implying this greatest benefit, and speaks of other things conferred on him in his life-time as a small thing, in comparison of it, ver. 19, 20, "And this was yet a small thing, in thy sight, O Lord God; but thou hast spoken also of thy servant's house for a great while to come. And is this the manner of man, O Lord God? And what can David say more unto thee? for thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant." And this he insists upon chiefly in his prayer, and in the following verses; and this, he elsewhere says, is all his salvation, and all his desire, or what he sets his heart upon more than any thing whatsoever. And the promise is renewed to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 5, "I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel for ever, as I promised unto David thy father; there shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel." And yet this same Solomon was thoroughly aware how little a man is benefited by the thought and hopes of what should be in the world after he is dead, which he shall never see or enjoy any thing of; and speaks of it as a great instance of men's folly and vanity to set their hearts upon it, and deprive themselves of present good for it. Eccles. ii. 24. "There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labours;" and iii. 12, 13, "I know that there is no good in them but for a man to rejoice, and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat, and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labours; it is the gift of God." Ver. 22. "Wherefore I perceive that there is nothing better, than that a man should rejoice in his own works; for that is his portion: for who shall bring him to see what shall be after him?" Eccles. ix. 4, 5, 6, 7. "A living dog is better than a dead lion—for the dead—have no more a reward——neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun. Go thy way."

The saints in heaven will be under advantages to see much more of it than the saints on earth, and to be every way more directly, fully, and perfectly acquainted with all that appertains to it, and that manifests the glory of it; the glory of God's wisdom and other perfections in it. The blessed fruit and end of it, in the eternal glory and blessedness of the subjects of the work of God at that day, will be daily in their view, in those that come out of dying bodies to heaven. And the church in heaven will be much more concerned in it than one part of the church on earth shall be in the prosperity of another.

The blessedness of the church triumphant in heaven, and their joy and glory will as much consist in beholding the success of Christ's redemption on earth, and in as great proportion, as the joy that was set before Christ consists in it, or as the glory and reward of Christ as God man and Mediator consists in it.

[1072] *Happiness of heaven.* The saints in heaven will enjoy God as their portion, and possess all things in the most excellent manner possible; in that they will have all in Christ their head. Christ their head is as it were their organ of enjoyment; but the capacity of enjoyment that this organ hath, is of infinitely greater extent than the capacity of any of Christ's members taken separately, or by themselves; as the head of the natural body, by reason of its extensive and noble senses, has such a much greater capacity of enjoyment than the inferior members of the body by themselves. Were not the saints united to Christ, they could never enjoy God the Father in so excellent a manner as now they will in heaven, partaking with Christ in his enjoyment of him. And so they never could possess all the works of God in so excellent and glorious a manner as they do in their head, who has the absolute possession of all, and rules over all, and disposes all things according to his will; for by virtue of their union with Christ, they also shall rule over all. They shall sit with him in his throne, and reign over the same kingdom, as his body, and shall see all things disposed according to their will; for the will of the Head will be the will of the whole body. Christ being their head, the gratifying of his will shall be as much for their happiness, as if it were their own will separately that was gratified; for they shall have no other will, as the natural body, head, and members have but one will; and on the other hand, the holy desires of the saints (as they will have no other desires) will be evermore Christ's will. The appetite of the members will ever be the will of the head. If the whole universe were given to a saint separately, he could not fully possess it, his capacity would be too narrow. He would not know how to dispose of it for his own good; as the inferior members of the natural body would not know how to dispose of things that the body has possession of for their good, without the eyes or the head. And if the saints did know, they would not have strength sufficient; but in Christ their Head they have perfect knowledge and infinite strength.

[1089] *The saints in heaven acquainted with the state of the church on earth.* The man Christ Jesus is the head of the glorified saints in heaven. He is the head of the glorious assembly, who leads them in all their worship and praise, and is

their vital Head. They are in some sense the glorified body of Christ; they are with him as it were in all things, being partakers with him in all, all his exaltation and glory, all his reward, all his enjoyment of God the Father, all his reward by obtaining the joy set before him, his reign here on earth, the glory of his reign in his kingdom of grace, the bestowment of the promised reward in what is done to the elect here, his enjoyment of the success of his redemption, his seeing his seed the pleasure of the Lord, prospering in his hands, his justifying many by his righteousness, his conquering his enemies, his subduing and triumphing over Satan, and Antichrist, and all other enemies. What He sees of God, they in their measure see; what He sees of the church of God on earth, and of the flourishing of religion here, they see according to their capacity; what He sees of the punishment of his enemies in hell, they see in him; and therefore this damnation of the enemies of Christ, and its being in the presence of the inhabitants of heaven, consisting of Christ, and saints, and angels, is expressed thus, Rev. xiv. 10: "They shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:" Saying nothing of the glorified saints, including them in the name of the *Lamb*. Christ, with his glorified mystical body, being but one mystical person, for he is the head of the glorified body, as the sight of the eyes that are in the head are for the information of the whole body, and what he enjoys they enjoy; they are with him in his honour and advancement; they are with him in his pleasures; they are with him in his enjoyment of the Father's love; the love wherewith the Father loves him is in them, and he in them; they are with him in the joy of his success on earth; they are with him in his joy at the conversion of one sinner. The good shepherd, when he has found the sheep that was lost, calls together his friends and neighbours, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost," Luke xv. 5, 6. And they are with him in his joy at the conversion of nations, and the world. The day of Christ's espousals is the day of the gladness of his heart, Cant. iii. 11. The day of the marriage of the Lamb is the day of Christ's rejoicing. Isai. lxii. 5; Zeph. iii. 17. So it is the day of the gladness and rejoicing of the hearts of the saints in heaven, Rev. xix. 1—9. When he rides forth in this world, girding his sword on his thigh in his glory and majesty, to battle against Antichrist and other enemies, they are represented as riding forth in glory with him, Rev. xix., and in his triumph they triumph. They appear on mount Zion with him with palms in their hands; and as Satan is bruised under *his* feet, so he is bruised under their feet also. The saints, there-

fore have no more done with the state of the church and kingdom on earth, because they have left this world, and have ascended into heaven; than Christ himself had, when he left the earth and ascended into heaven, who was so far from having done with the prosperity of his church and kingdom here, as to any immediate concern in those things by reason of his ascension, that he ascended to that very end, that he might be more concerned, that he might receive the glory and reward of the enlargement and prosperity of his church, and the conquest of his enemies here, that he might reign in this kingdom, and be under the best advantages for it, and might have the fullest enjoyment of the glory of it, as much as a king ascends a throne in order to reign over his people, and receive the honour and glory of his dominion over them. Christ came with clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before him to that very end, that he might receive dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him, Dan. vii. 13, 14. God the Father bade him sit at his right hand, that his enemies might be made his footstool, and rule in the midst of his enemies, and that he might enjoy that glorious reward that is called receiving the dew of his youth, and judging among the heathen, and wounding the heads over many countries, Ps. cx. God the Father set Christ on his holy hill of Zion, to that end that he might have the heathen for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And when the saints leave this lower world by death, and ascend to heaven, they do but follow their Forerunner; they ascend as it were with him, they are made to sit together in heavenly places in him, they are exalted to partake of his exaltation, they have written upon them the name of the city of his God, and his own new name, to sit with him in his throne, as he, when he ascended, sat down with the Father in his throne, to rule with him over the same kingdom, to partake with him in his reward, his honour, his victory, and triumph over his enemies, his joy that was set before him, viz. the joy of the success of his redemption, the joy of seeing his seed, of finding his lost sheep, the satisfaction of seeing of the travail of his soul, &c. They in this world travail with him for the same thing, they are crucified with Christ, they deny themselves to promote and advance his kingdom and glory in the world: they many of them suffer with him, and die with him in the very same cause, and their sufferings are called a filling up the sufferings of Christ; and as they suffer with him on earth in this cause, so they shall reign with him, they shall enjoy with him the prosperity of that cause, that interest which they sought by their labours and sufferings, as he did by his labours and sufferings when he was on the earth. They shall be as much with Christ in partaking with him

of the glory of his reigning over the world in his kingdom of grace, as they shall partake with him in the glory of his judging the world. Indeed they now are not visibly to the inhabitants of the earth reigning with Christ over his kingdom of grace here; as they will hereafter be seen judging the world with Christ. No more is Christ himself now seen by the inhabitants of the earth visibly reigning here, as he will be seen judging at the day of judgment; but yet this does not hinder, but that he does now as truly reign here, and possess and enjoy the glory of this dominion, as he will truly judge at the end of the world.

The saints in going out of this world and ascending into heaven, do not go out of sight of the affairs that appertain to Christ's kingdom and church here, and things appertaining to that great work of redemption that is carrying on here; but on the contrary, go out of a state of obscurity, and ascend above the mists and clouds into the bright light, and ascend a pinnacle in the very centre of light, where every thing appears in clear view. The saints that are ascended to heaven have advantage to view the state of Christ's kingdom in this world, and the works of the new creation here, as much greater than they had before, as a man that ascends to the top of an high mountain has greater advantage to view the face of the earth than he had while he was below in a deep valley or forest, surrounded on every side with those things that impeded and limited his sight.

On this account, as well as others, both Christ and his saints are beautifully represented as ascending and reigning on a mountain, mount Zion, God's holy mountain, the mountain of the height of Israel, &c. On this mountain, they have their kingdom in view; as David, who dwelled and reigned in mount Zion, had Jerusalem in view; and as the saints in heaven have greater advantage to see those things, so also to enjoy them, to see the glory of them, and receive comfort and joy by them. They are under great advantage to possess them as theirs, being with Christ who does possess, in communion with whom they enjoy and possess their infinite portion, their whole heavenly inheritance and kingdom; as much as the whole body has all the pleasure of music by the ear, and all the pleasure of its food by the mouth and stomach, and all the benefit and refreshment of the air breathed in by the lungs; and thus it is the saints in heaven sing to the Lamb, Rev. v. 9. 10. "Thou art worthy, &c.; for thou hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, and hast made us kings and priests, *and we shall reign on the earth.*" Thus it is, "The meek shall inherit the earth;" for Christ is the heir of the world, he has purchased the kingdom; the kingdom is promised him by the Father, and at last shall be given him when other kingdoms are destroyed, Dan. vii. 14; and the saints are heirs with Christ, and

shall inherit with him the same kingdom, and reign in the same kingdom, and so they shall enjoy the victory with him: he binds kings in chains; and all the saints shall have that honour with him, Ps. cxlix. 5, to the end. And thus it is that, when the time comes that Christ shall break his enemies with a rod of iron, they also shall have power over the nations, and shall rule them with a rod of iron, &c. Rev. ii. 26, 27, 28. And thus it is the souls of the martyrs of Jesus shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Rev. xx. They shall be most nearly interested in this revival or spiritual resurrection of the church that shall be then, that shall be in some sense the resurrection of Christ himself in the same manner as the setting up the kingdom of Christ in the world, is represented as Christ's being born. Rev. xii. They shall possess the joy and happiness of that revival of the church; it will be as much their own, and much more in some respects, than of the saints on earth; see Rev. xix. the former part of the chapter. Thus Abraham, who is spoken of as the heir of the world, inherits it, possesses his inheritance, and shall enjoy the great promise of old made to him.

As the saints in heaven shall be under much greater advantage in heaven to see and enjoy God than when on earth, so they shall be proportionally under much greater advantage to see and enjoy the works of God, and especially those works of God which appertain to the work of redemption; which is that work by which God chiefly manifests himself to the inhabitants of the heavenly world, and especially the redeemed there. The saints and angels see God by beholding the displays of his perfections, but the perfections of God are displayed and manifested chiefly by their effects. The chief way wherein the wisdom of God is to be seen is in the wise acts and operations of God, and so of his power and mercy, and justice, and other perfections. But these are seen even by the angels themselves, chiefly by what God does in the work of redemption. Eph. iii. 10. "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God."

Corol. Hence we learn one reason, why the promises of the future glory of the church in this world are so much insisted on in the word of God, delivered to his church ages before the accomplishment.

Objection. In Eccles. ix. 5, 6, it is said of the dead, that they know not any thing; neither have they any more a portion for ever in any thing that is done under the sun.

Ans. 1. Their having no more a portion, &c. implies no more, than that they shall no more be interested in sublunary things, or in any worldly concern. But not that they are not interested

in the spiritual and heavenly affairs of that family of God, that is not of the world, that are chosen and called out of the world, and redeemed from the earth; and, as is represented by the apostle, do not live in the world, but have their conversation and citizenship in heaven.

2. It is manifest that by the context, the wise man speaks of temporal death as it is in itself, and not as it is by redemption, an inlet into a more happy state, in those that are redeemed from death, from the power of the grave; for the dead are here said to have no more a reward, and as being in a far worse state than when living. Ver. 4. The wise man's design and drift leads him to speak of temporal death, or death as it is in itself, with regard to things temporal and visible, without any respect to a future state of existence; and therefore, all that is implied is, that the dead body knows not any thing; they that are in their graves know not any thing, not but that the immortal soul that never dies knows something, knows as well that the dead body shall rise again, as the living know that they must die. It is in this sense, and no other, that all things come alike to all, and there is one event to the righteous and the wicked, ver. 3, and preceding verses. The event is the same in the death of both, only as temporal death is the same in all. In this sense, as dieth the wise man, so the fool. Chap. ii. 16.

Texts of scripture that show that the saints in heaven see and are concerned, and interested in the prosperity of the church on earth. Math. xix. 27, to the end; Prov. x. 30; Ps. xxv. 13.

[1095] *Saints in heaven reign on earth.* It is evident, when Christ promises a kingdom to his true followers, as he does especially in Luke xxii. 29, 30; that one thing especially intended, is their rejoicing with him in his kingdom of grace on earth; by Christ's words in that place: "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me, that ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, *and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*" By this it also appears, that by that expression, used here and elsewhere, of *sitting on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*, is not intended merely judging the world with Christ at the day of judgment; (as indeed it will be unreasonable on other accounts to suppose this chiefly intended, for the saints' judging the world, at the day of judgment, will not consist in their judging the church of God; for they shall all have the blessed sentence pronounced on them together, and sit down on Christ's right hand together, to be assessors with him in judging others: after this they shall not judge one another ever again;) but their judging the world will consist in their judging angels and wicked men.

[1119] *The saints in heaven acquainted with what is done on earth.* It is an argument of this that God so often calls the heavens to be witness of his dealings with men on earth, Deut. xxxi. 28; xxxii. 1; iv. 26; xxx. 19; Ps. i. 4; Isai. i. 2.

[1121] *Saints and angels in heaven acquainted with what is done on earth.* The psalmist, in Ps. lxxxix. speaking of the work of Redemption, the covenant God had made with his chosen, God's prosecuting the designs of his mercy and covenant faithfulness in his dealings with his church from age to age, and gradually bringing the designs of his mercy to their consummation, as an architect gradually erects and completes a building, ver. 1. 5, says, ver. 5, "The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord, thy faithfulness also in the congregation of thy saints," or holy ones. Now this cannot be merely such a figure of speech as when sometimes the earth, seas, rocks, mountains and trees, are called upon to praise the Lord. This is rather a prediction of an event that shall come to pass, of the notice the heavens shall take of those particular wonders of God's mercy and faithfulness, and their celebrating them in their praises, and doing it in the assembly of God's holy ones. And what assembly can that be but that which we read of, Heb. xii. 22, 23? Such a praising of the heavens seems here to be spoken of, as is described in Rev. v. 8, to the end; vii. 9, 10, 11, 15, 16, 17; xii. 10, 11, 12; xiv. 3; xviii. 20; xix. 1—7.

[1134] *Heaven, the everlasting abode of the church.* That the saints shall enter into heaven after the day of judgment, and not continue with Christ here below is evident; John, xiv. 2, 3. "In my Father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also." Doubtless these words, "I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am," &c., will be most eminently fulfilled at Christ's second coming at the end of the world, that second coming spoken of, Heb. ix. last verse. And when it is said he will receive them to himself to be where he is, he must be understood to the place to which I am now to go, to that house of my Father to which I am ascending, in which I am going to prepare a place for you. At my second coming I will receive you to those mansions which I now go to prepare in my Father's house.

It is also evident that Christ went to the highest heavens, the third heaven, far above all heavens, at his first ascension, as the Forerunner of his people; implying that they shall all go there in their turn, or after him; and doubtless in this he was the Forerunner of them, with respect to their reception of their proper reward, or their complete happiness, which will

not be till the last day; and their Forerunner as to a bodily ascension or translation, wherein the saints' bodies shall be made like to Christ's glorious body, and shall ascend as that did. But they will not have glorified bodies till then; and he is doubtless the Forerunner of the *whole* church in going to heaven; which he would not be, if after the day of judgment the saints were to stay here below; for those, who shall then be found alive, in such a case never would ascend into heaven at all. And then it is most reasonable to suppose, that Christ will be the first fruits in his ascension, in like manner as in his resurrection; but Christ is the first fruits in his resurrection with regard to what the saints shall be the subjects of at the second coming of Christ: 1 Cor. xv. 23, "Christ the first fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming."

[1137] *Happiness of heaven.* When God had finished the work of creation, he is represented as resting, and being refreshed and rejoicing in his works. The apostle compares the happiness Christ entered into, after he had finished his labours and sufferings in the work of Redemption, to this, Heb. iv. 4. 10.

Therefore we may well suppose, that very much of Christ's happiness in heaven consists in beholding the glory of God appearing in the work of redemption; and so in rejoicing in his own work and reaping the sweet fruit of it, the glorious success of it, which was the joy that was set before him. And as the apostle represents the future happiness of the saints by a participation of God's rest and Christ's rest from their works, Heb. iv. 4—11. This seems to argue two things, viz.

1. That the way that the saints will be happy in beholding the glory of God, will be very much in beholding the glory of his perfections in his works.

2. That the happiness of the saints in heaven, especially since Christ's ascension, consisting in beholding God's glory, will consist very much in seeing his glory in the work of redemption. The happiness of departed saints under the Old Testament consisted much in beholding the glory of God in the works of creation; in beholding which, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." But their happiness, since Christ's ascension, consists much more in beholding the glory of God in the work of redemption, since the old creation, in comparison of this, is no more mentioned, nor comes into mind. But they will be glad and rejoice for ever in this work.

The beatific vision of God in heaven consists mostly in beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, either in his work, or in his person as appearing in the glorified human nature.

[1246] *The saints higher in glory than the angels.* It is evident that the four and twenty elders in the Revelation do represent the church or company of glorified saints by their song. Chap. v. 9, 10. "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, and hast made us unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign on the earth." But these are represented from time to time as sitting in a state of honour, with white raiment and crowns of gold, and in seats of dignity, in thrones of glory, next to the throne of God and the Lamb, being nextly the most observable and conspicuous sight to God, and Christ, and the four living ones. Chap. iv. 4. "And round about the throne were four and twenty seats, and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment, and they had on their heads crowns of gold." So chap. v. 6. "And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living ones, and in the midst of the elders stood a Lamb, as it had been slain." And the angels are represented as further off from the throne than they being round about them, as they are round about the throne, and the beasts, and the elders, and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands. So chap. vii. 11. "And all the angels stood round about the throne and about the elders, and fell down before the throne on their faces and worshipped God." These things make the matter of the superiority of the privilege of the saints in heaven very plain.

[1281] *Hades—Saints before the resurrection—saints in heaven have communion in the prosperity of the church on earth.* There are three things very manifest from Heb. vi. 12; "*That ye be not slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

1. That the souls of the saints do go to a state of rewards and glorious happiness before the *Resurrection.* That although the resurrection be indeed the proper time of their reward, and their happiness before be small in comparison of what it will be afterwards, yet that they are received to such a degree of happiness before, that they may be said to be *in possession* of the promises of the covenant of grace. Those whom the apostle has reference to, when he speaks of them that now *inherit* the promises, are the Old Testament saints, and particularly the patriarchs, as appears by the next words, where the apostle instances in Abraham, and the promise made to him, and of his patiently enduring, and then obtaining the promise.

Again: It is manifest the things promised to Abraham which the apostle speaks of, were things which were not fulfilled till

after his death; and it is manifest by what the apostle expressly declares in this epistle that he supposed that Abraham and the other Patriarchs did not obtain the promises while in this life, chap. xi. 13. Speaking there of these patriarchs in particular, he says, "Those all died in faith, not having received the promises." But here he speaks of them as now *inheriting* the promises. This word, as it is used every where in the New Testament, implies *actual possession* of the inheritance; and so as it is used in the Septuagint. It generally signifies the actual possessing of an inheritance, lot, estate, or portion, and that being now in actual possession of the promised happiness, is what the apostle means in this place, is beyond dispute, by what he says, as further explaining himself in the words immediately following; where he says that Abraham, after he had patiently endured, *obtained the promise.* He not only has the *right* of an heir to the promise, which he had while he lived, but he actually *obtained* it, though he died, not having received the promise. And that we should suppose this to be the meaning of the apostle, is agreeable to what he says, chap. x. 36. "For ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise." And that the apostle, when he speaks here of Abraham's having *obtained* the promise after patiently enduring, does not mean merely in a figurative sense, viz. that the promise of multiplying his natural posterity was fulfilled after his death, though he was dead, and his soul asleep, knowing nothing of the matter, for the word is in the present tense, *inherit* the promises, not only *did obtain* them, but *continues still to possess and enjoy* them, though Abraham's natural seed had been greatly diminished, and the promised land at that time under the dominion of the heathen, and the greater part of the people at that time broken off by unbelief, and rejected from being God's people, and their city, and land, and the bulk of the nation on the borders of the most dreadful destruction and desolation that ever befel any people.

2. If we compare this with what the apostle says elsewhere in this epistle, it is manifest that the saints he speaks of inherit the promises *in heaven*, and not in any other place in the bowels of the earth, or elsewhere called *Hades.* For it is evident that the promised inheritance which they looked for and sought after, and the promises of which they by faith were persuaded of and embraced, and the promise of which drew their hearts off from this world, was in heaven; this is manifest by chap. xi. 13, 14, 15, 16, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuad-

ed of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he hath prepared for them a city." And the heavenly inheritance in the heavenly Canaan, or land of rest, which Christ has entered into, is that which the apostle all along in this epistle speaks of as the great subject matter of God's promises which the saints obtain through faith and patience. Chap. iii. 11. 14, and chap. iv. 1. 3. 9, 10, 11; viii. 6, and ix. 15, and x. 34, and xii. 1, 2. 16, to the end.

3. Another thing, which may be strongly argued from this, is, that the happiness of the *separate souls* of saints in heaven consists very much in beholding the works of God relating to man's redemption wrought here below, and the stages of infinite grace, wisdom, holiness, and power in establishing and building up the *church of God on earth.* For what was that promise which the apostle here has special reference to, and expressly speaks of, that Abraham obtained after he had patiently endured, which promise God confirmed with an oath, and in which we Christians and all the heirs of the promise partake with Abraham, and in the promises of which to be greatly confirmed, we have strong consolation and great hope? The apostle tells us, verses 13, 14, "For, when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself; saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee." This promise is chiefly fulfilled in the great increase of the church of God by the Messiah, and particularly in the calling of the Gentiles, pursuant to the promise made to Abraham, that in his seed all the families of the earth should be blessed, Rom. iv. 11. 13. 16, 17; Heb. xi. 12.

When the apostle speaks of their inheriting the promises, he seems to have a special respect to the glorious accomplishment of the great promises made to the patriarchs concerning their seed now in those days of the gospel; as is greatly confirmed by chap. xi. 39, "And these all having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise, God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect;" plainly signifying, that they received not the promise in their life-time; the promise having respect to that better thing that was to be accomplished in that age, in

which the apostle and those he wrote to lived, and that the promise they relied upon was not completed, and their faith and hope in the promise not crowned, till they saw this better thing accomplished. Rev. xiv. 13. " They rest from their labours, and their works do follow them;" follow *with them*, μετ αυτων, not to come many thousand years after them, as Mr. Baxter observes. Doddridge on Rev. xiv. 13.

END OF VOL. VIII.

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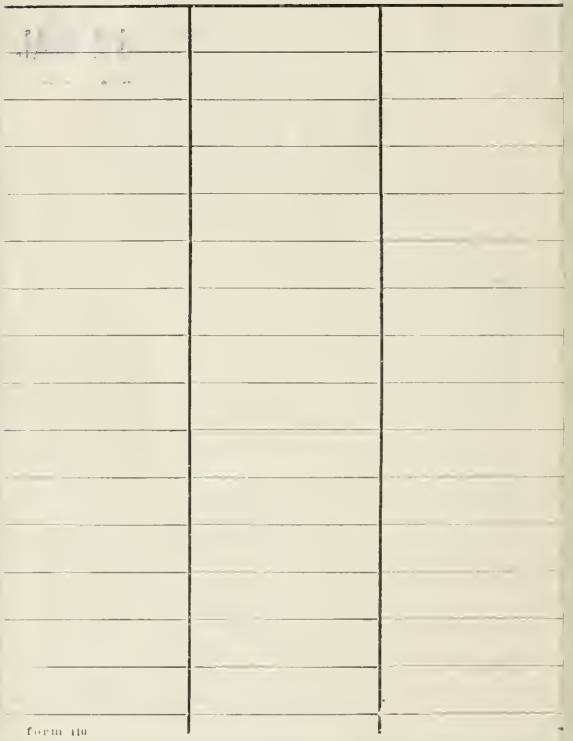

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